NOVEMBER, 1901.

THE ROYAL

4D.

No. 37. Vol. VII.—November, 1901.

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WORTH A GUINEA A BOX

THESE ARE
THE PILLS
THAT CURE

ALL BILIOUS
& NERVOUS
DISORDERS

(IN BOXES)
1/1½ & 2/9

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OF THE
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"A new invention is brought before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit."—*Adams.*

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ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'

A Simple Remedy for Preventing and Curing by Natural Means

All Functional Derangements of the Liver, Temporary Congestion arising from Alcoholic Beverages, Errors in Diet, Biliousness, Sick Headache, Giddiness, Vomiting, Heartburn, Sourness of the Stomach, Constipation, Thirst, Skin Eruptions, Boils, Feverish Cold with High Temperature and Quick Pulse, Influenza, Throat Affections, and Fevers of all kinds.

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THE JEOPARDY OF LIFE
IS IMMENSELY INCREASED.

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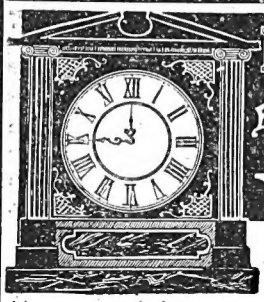

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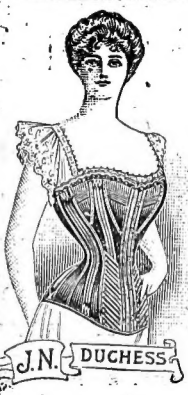

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A Full Dress Length of JOHN NOBLE CHEVIOT SERGE or COSTUME COATING (6 yards, 52 inches wide) for 7/6. Car. 8d. **7/6**
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FROM 9/11.
Costume Skirt with three shaped frills, top one headed with good braid. Unlined. In John Noble Cheviot Serge or Costume, **9/11.** In "Milner" Vicuna Cloth, **11/9.** In "Melbourne" Costume Cloth, **15/6.** Car. 5d. Lined through **2/6** ex.

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"Sirs,—Please forward to Balmoral Castle one dozen 2/6 Tins of BENGER'S FOOD for H.I.M. THE EMPRESS OF RUSSIA, addressed to Miss Coster. We have received the box ordered from Peterhoff.

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opens the pores and sweats all the poisons out of the blood, leaving it pure and healthy.

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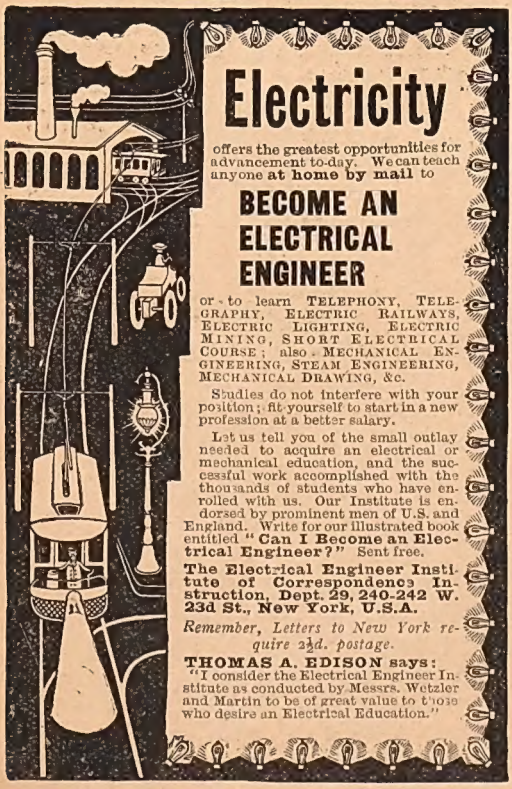

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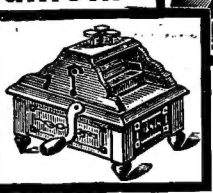

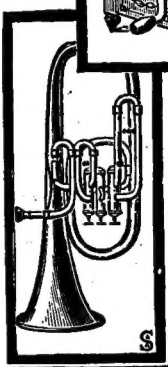

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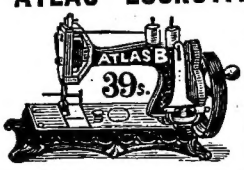

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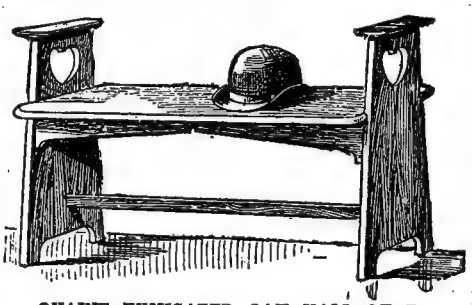

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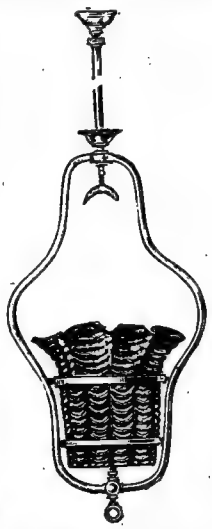

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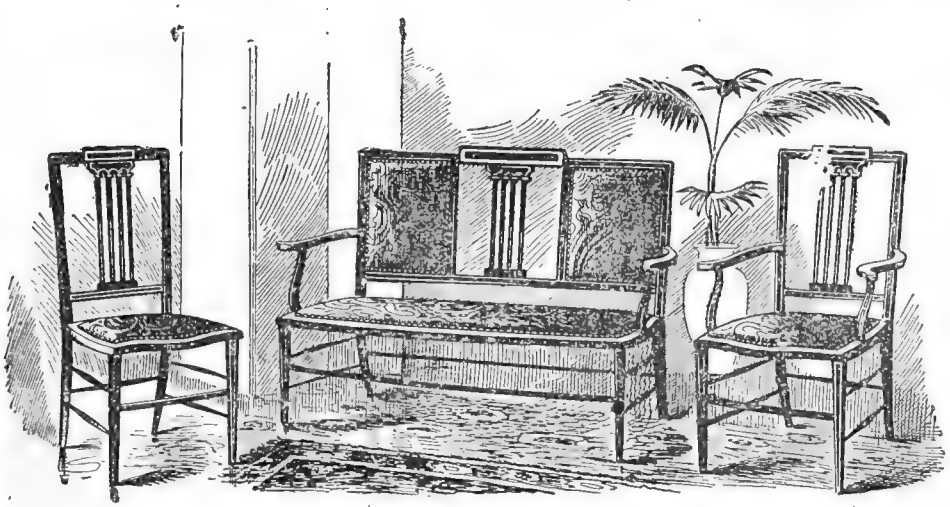

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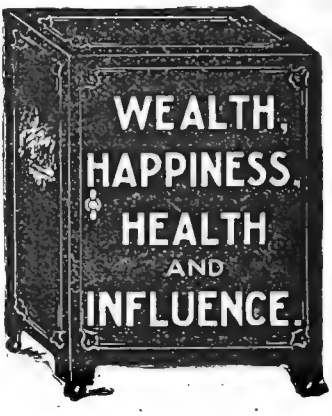

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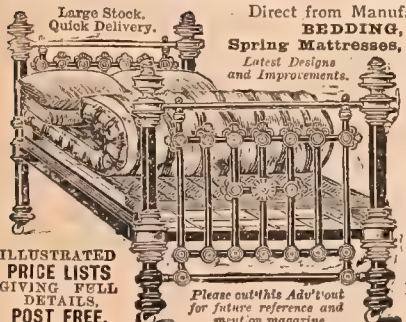

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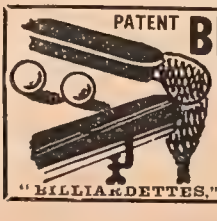

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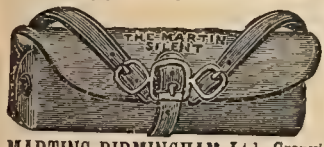

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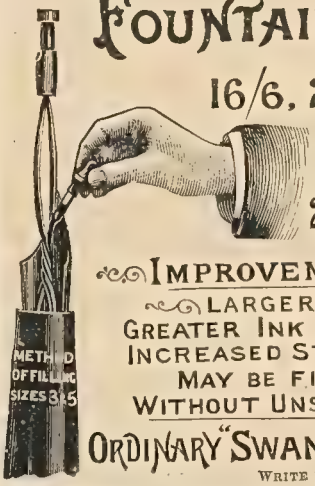

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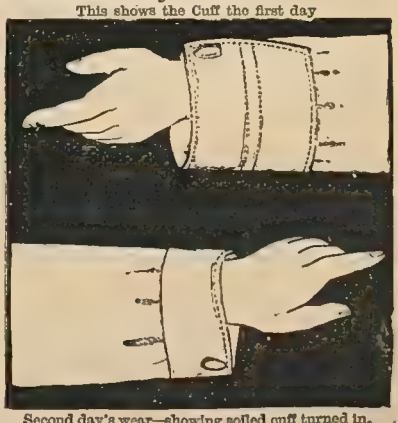

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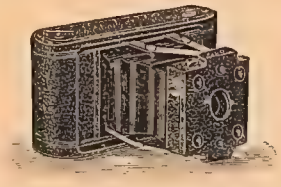

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THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER, 1901.

		PAGE
OUTSIDE COVER designed by S. Nation.		
ADELINA GENÉE From a Photograph by Hana.		*Frontispiece.*
FROM THE STALLS Illustrated with Photographs.		3
THE KISS OF THE SUN GOD. A Complete Story. Illustrated by P. B. Hickling.	NOLAN OF CASTLENOCK	12
PICTURES THAT COST OVER A POUND A SECOND Illustrated with Photographs.	CHARLES BANHAM	18
A CHAMPION IN MINIATURE. A Complete Story Illustrated by Harold Copping.	E. N. JAMESON	23
SMILES AND SMILES Illustrated with Photographs by Foulsham and Banfield.		28
A MATTER OF ASSURANCE. A Complete Story Illustrated by J. Barnard Davis	ALEXANDER ROSS	30
THE SILENT SPEAKER Illustrated with Photographs.	STANLEY WHITE	37
QUITS. A Complete Story. Illustrated by P. Bell.	CANNING WILLIAMS	42
ON AND OFF THE WHEEL Illustrated with Photographs.	LIVINGSTONE BLACK	47
SIR DAN DE LION. A Poem. Illustrated by R. Percy Gossop.	HENRY EDLIN	50
THE INFATUATION OF CATTERWINK-DANE. A Complete Story. Illustrated by R. Pannett.	SYDNEY CLIVE	51
THE BANJO KING Illustrated with Photographs.	FRANK HOLMFIELD	58
CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE. A Complete Story. Illustrated by Ralph Cleaver.	PHILIP MARCEL	62
CHALK SCULPTURES Illustrated with Photographs.	ARTHUR GOODRICH	70
HALLIDINA AND THE KING'S HAIR. A Complete Story. Illustrated by Henry Mayer.	ARTHUR HENRY	73
DEEP SEA DIVING Illustrated by J. J. Cameron.	OWEN BORDERMAN	78
THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL. A Complete Story. Illustrated by T. H. Robinson.	BASSETT HASTINGS	85
CAP AND BELLS Illustrated with Drawings.		93

The Editor will always be ready to consider contributions, whether literary or pictorial, and, where stamps are enclosed, will make every endeavour to ensure their safe return in the event of their proving unsuitable, although he cannot hold himself responsible for any MSS. or drawings or photographs sent on approval.

Cases for the first three half-yearly Volumes of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are now ready, and can be obtained at the Publishing Office, price 1/- each, or post free 1/2.

Bound Volumes of the third and fourth six months are ready, 4/- each, post free, 4/6.

The original drawings in this Number are on sale on application to the Editor.

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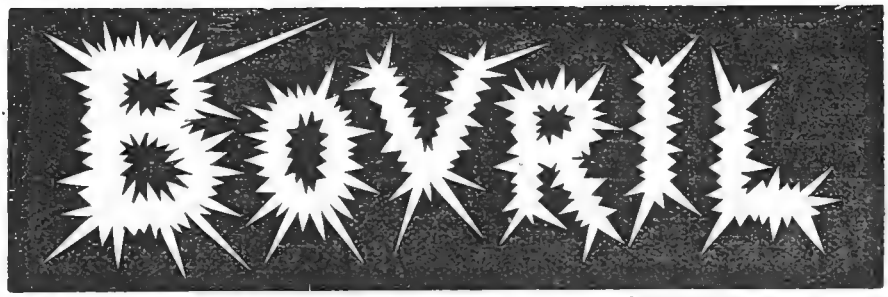

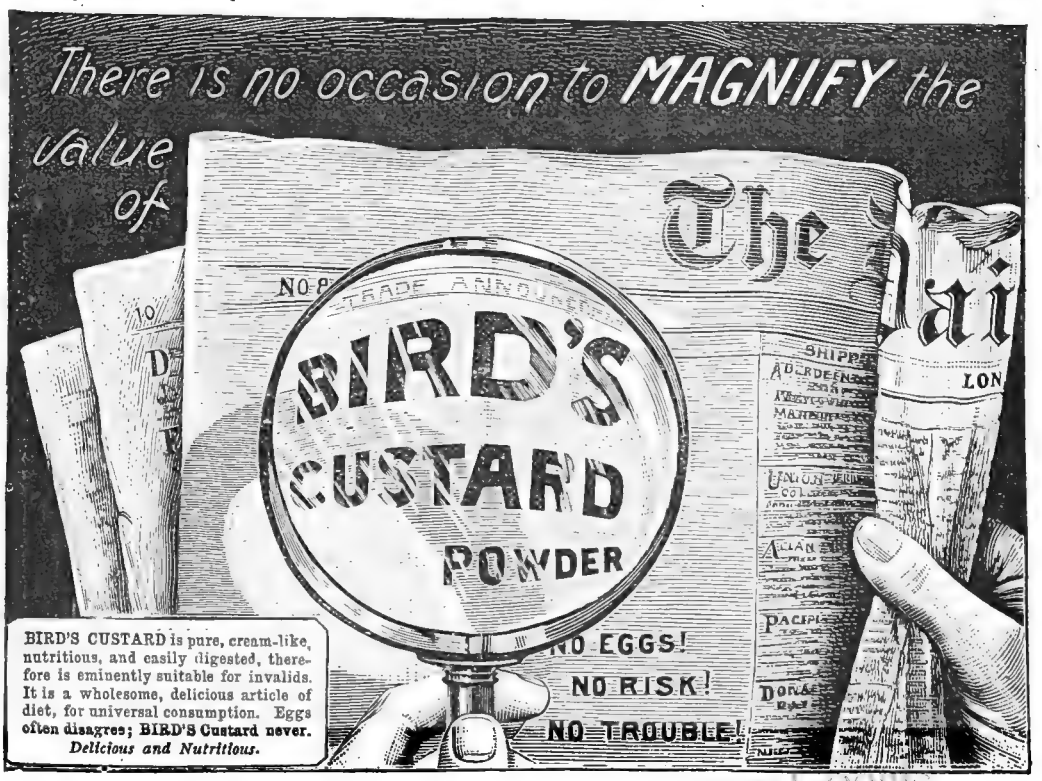
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Photo, Hana.

ADELINA GENÉE.

Beauty and genius are the rarest combination in the world. In Mlle. Genee they are so equally combined as to make one wonder to which she owes her fame and position: to her sweet face or to her nimble feet. Well, perhaps both may claim equal honours; but if you asked Mlle. Genée herself she would reply, in her charming foreign manner: "To neither, my friend! I owe all I am to my good uncle. When I was quite a little girl he discerned what poor gifts were mine, and gave me a training that comes to the lot of few."

Well, if Mlle. Genée is fortunate in her uncle, M. Genée is no less fortunate in his niece.

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FROM THE STALLS

Photo, Ellis & Walery.

BEATRICE FERRAR.

Have you ever found a pretty girl absolutely devoid of vanity? No? But then you do not know Miss Beatrice Ferrar. "I do not mind how ugly my make-up is so long as I carry out the author's idea," she says, and I think it is this which accounts for her success. Personally a very refined and charming girl, she is willing to play the meanest and ugliest *rôles*, and no actress is more indefatigable. Off the boards she is ready for any amusement: cycling, swimming, boating; and in all, as might be expected, she is an adept.

Photo, Hana.

MAY SHARPLES.

Pretty and bright and clever. All who saw her in "The Casino Girl" went away with the impression that America had once again provided a charming amusement for English playgoers. Will they believe it? — Miss Sharples is neither American nor has she ever set foot in that land of promise! She is an English girl born and bred, with all the charm of an English girl and of an American as well.

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Photo, Hana.

ADDIE LENNARD.

"The thirst for excitement which every actress is supposed to possess was quenched, as far as I am concerned, by a train collision, in which I narrowly escaped with my life. I prefer the most humdrum existence to excitement of that sort!" And Miss Lennard goes on to say that "stage life (and she speaks as one who knows, considering she has been on the boards since the age of nine) is not a perpetual round of excitement, as some girls imagine, but rather work! work! work! And yet there is no life to be compared with it!" Her spare moments Miss Lennard devotes to exercise—"mostly of the Sandow kind. And then, let me tell you, I'm a great cricketer. They talk a lot of tennis and croquet. Cricket for me!"

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Photo, Ellis & Walery.

BEATRICE TERRY.

Her eleventh birthday occurred this month. She has our best wishes. Did you see her in "A Man from Blankly's"? Her acting was a revelation: nothing sweeter and more natural can be imagined. No leading lady could be more self-possessed, none more effective. She is easily the first child actress on the English stage. But then you must never forget that Miss Beatrice is an old hand. She has been in the profession eight years, if you please! It was at the mature age of three that she made her *début*—with great success, I hear. The *rôle* assigned her was that of the baby in the first act of "Olivia." Since then she has played many parts and scored many triumphs. Once again: our congratulations and best wishes!

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Photo, Bassano.

RUBY VERDI.

She never goes anywhere without her mother, and, sad to relate, Mrs. Verdi hates the sea, being desperately afraid, not of drowning, but of something far worse—sea-sickness. So Miss Ruby has refused many engagements in America. A dutiful daughter truly, and a very sweet girl, is she not? "I have refused many advantageous offers of marriage," she remarks very gravely, "because their acceptance would have meant abandonment of the stage." Strange! for the only stage Miss Verdi knows as yet (she is certain one day to become a fine dramatic actress) is that of the music-hall. To an outsider even married life would seem preferable.

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Photo, Hana.

MAY BELFORT.

Her profession has carried her to the uttermost parts of the earth, but the London audience pleases her best. "Your Londoner," she says, "may not be very lively, but he's so easy to please. He always laughs at a song, and generally applauds. But Continental audiences are wickedly alive to the artistic points of the work, and should you make a fault they're down on you like a ton of bricks." However, she is thoroughly appreciated in Paris, and brought down the house at St. Petersburg with "Louisiana Lou," which she discovered was based on a Russian melody. She considers herself a very tame sort of person. Look at her picture, and tell me whether you agree. Her hobby is painting.

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Photo, Ellis & Walery.

GERTIE MILLAR.

You must not believe what this charming Yorkshire beauty says of her character, but since she said it one may as well put it down. "I am very slow to make friends and most suspicious by nature. Yes, I know it's horrid, but it's true, nevertheless, and I can't help it. It's all the fault of the terribly hard struggle I have had to make any headway whatever in my profession. I have been often so badly treated that it's made me bitter and misanthropic. Would you believe that I have sometimes known what it is to be without a penny in my pocket?"

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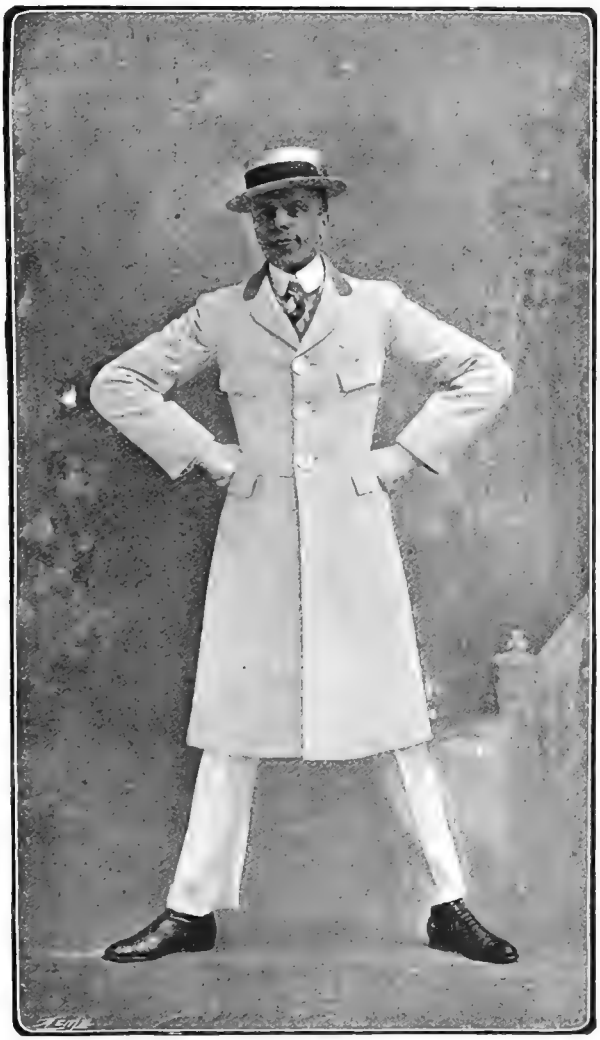
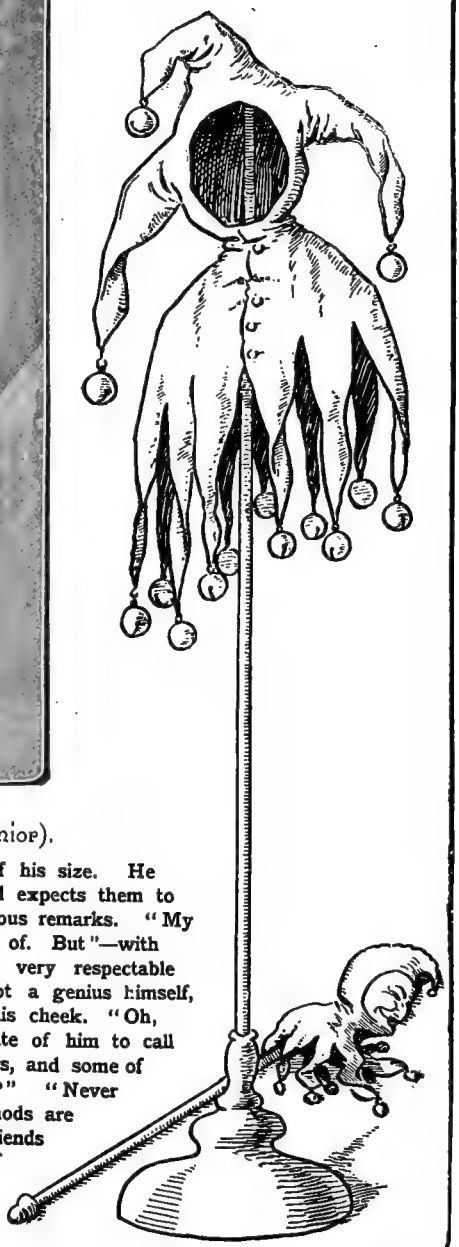


Photo, Ellis & Walery.

GEORGE GROSSMITH (Junior).

Coming of a diminutive race he is naturally proud of his size. He tells everyone he is six feet in his stockings and expects them to believe it. Indeed, he is fond of making humorous remarks. "My father has had no theatrical experience worth speaking of. But"—with condescension—"my Uncle Weedon is really a very respectable actor." Well, if this supercilious youth were not a genius himself, he would deserve a sharp rap on the knuckles for his cheek. "Oh, and speaking of my father, it is most inconsiderate of him to call himself George. He opens so many of my letters, and some of 'em contain bills, you know, and——" "What else?" "Never mind. Let me tell you about my acting. My methods are very interesting. I always study from life. My friends—the *jeunesse dorée* of Society, you know—I take off on the stage." "But don't they object?" "Of course not. They're immensely flattered."



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SADA YACCO.

If you admire an orchid you must admire the face of Sada Yacco. Both, to alien eyes, have an exotic charm, a beauty that is largely due to its strangeness. Her black hair and long narrow eyes are quite Japanese; her complexion is more exquisitely beautiful than anything I have ever seen before. It is like old ivory faintly flushed with rose.

And so sweet is the woman herself you feel no surprise that London and Paris fell prostrate at her feet.

Tragedy is Madame Yacco's *métier*, and her idols are Kawakami, Shakespeare, and Buddha.

The first-named of these happens to be her husband. Twice happy Kawakami!—to be enshrined together with Shakespeare and Buddha, and to find so fair a worshipper as the incomparable Sada Yacco!

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Photo, Hana.

PHYLLIS BROUGHTON.

We all know Phyllis Broughton the actress, fascinating, bright, and graceful, but Phyllis Broughton the woman is infinitely more charming. If you have not become an old friend of her's after five minutes' talk, you have become her ardent adorer. She thinks she will never marry, and her reason is quaint. "I love all men too well to love any single one in particular." A left-handed compliment, perhaps, but, anyhow, a compliment! "And so," she laughs, "I shall wake up some fine day and find myself an old maid with a cat.'

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By Nolan of Castleknock.

Russell, assistant-engineer, was down with the Sun. Not a dangerous "touch," the Doctor had said, but sufficiently serious to provoke a night or two of delirium with a probable week in bed to follow.

He had been restless and noisy during the night, so Hendrik, the chief engineer, had sent the native servant to bed and sat up with Russell himself.

Three years lived in a foreign country, in close companionship during work and leisure, generally provokes a strong friendship between men of a common nationality.

And the bond between Hendrik, chief engineer of the North Indian and Jungle Railway, and his assistant by no means lacked depth of feeling. During those three years their work had landed them in places where English life was often at a premium, and a common tongue and a common danger had cemented their fellowship.

So Hendrik had elected to sacrifice his rest for the sake of his prostrate friend.

In India the nights feel long even when one sleeps, and he was stiff and drowsy as he rose from the bedside and stretched himself.

Russell, apparently exhausted, lay with his head on one arm, in a restless slumber. Now and then his lips moved and he muttered some words. Their refrain was always the same—"she loves me! she loves me!"

He had been muttering during the greater part of the night—something about a "woman" whom he loved, and some "chap" whom he fancied he had wronged grievously.

Hendrik had wondered just a little at first, because women, as far as he knew, had never played a conspicuous part in Russell's career; then his practical nature attributed the matter to delirium pure and simple.

Presently Russell ceased muttering—he appeared to have fallen asleep.

Hendrik stepped towards the door softly.

The sun had been up some time now, and for that hour of the morning the heat was exceptional.

Hendrik leaned against the rail of the verandah and drew a long breath.

The open air after Russell's bedroom was grateful, but he shuddered as he glanced across the dead level of burnt-up plain in front. Day by day its awful monotony grew upon him.

Always the same languid clouds of dust, the same burnt-up foliage, and the same streak of railway for ever winding its way like a huge snake through the eternal, leather-like leaves. Here and there a few scattered trucks, standing out black and grim against the brazen blue of

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the sky. That was the picture. But Ah! the meanness—the horror of it all. Hendrik shuddered, as his glance wandered along the dull streak of railway.

Men sometimes shudder at their own handiwork.

More often than not, it tells of mis-spent energies and dying ambition—of disappointed hope and the graves of unrealised dreams.

To Hendrik those black trucks, standing out grim and sombre in the sunlight, were like the skeletons of dead years.

He felt strangely despondent this morning. Something like the shadow of a great calamity appeared to overhang him.

"The sleepless night," he thought. "I must shake it off. These morbid fancies seem to have taken quite a hold upon me lately."

But the long streak of railway and the thoughts it provoked, refused to be shaken off.

So many of his best years had been absorbed by that circling streak of iron—years that were unconsciously making him hard and narrow as its own gauge.

But there! Hendrik drew himself up and threw back his head. Then he laughed a little, noiselessly, as men do who have lived much away from civilisation.

It would soon be over. The railway was almost completed, and in a few months his long contract would expire.

How long that contract had been, only Hendrik himself knew.

Heart-burnings and much work had checked off the days on its calendar, but the reward was coming now, swift and sure.

After the lean years, would come the years of plenty—old England with its cool vales and fresh greens and home—home.

Hendrik's lips lingered over the word, lovingly. It meant so much to him—just everything in this world. It meant Rose.

And she! She, the dear little woman for whom he had worked so hard, that men had dropped his name Hendrik and from one end of the line to the other he was known as "the man who worked."

She! His wife, the dear little woman to whom he could deny nothing—for whom he would lay down his life, if her happiness demanded it—she—she—why it seemed an eternity since he had looked into those clear grey eyes of hers, and yet it was barely two years. Two years! It seemed like twenty since those glorious twelve months in Simla. What a jolly time it had been, and how sweet and gracious everybody said she was! Why! even Russell had succumbed to her sway. Poor old Jack, who looked upon women as the one stumbling-block in a man's career, had dropped his misogyny,

So Hendrik had elected to sacrifice his rest for the sake of his prostrate friend.

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pro tem., and admitted that he, Hendrik, *ought* to be happy.

And he was *happy*, then. Great Heavens! happy was hardly the term. Then the confounded sun grew too much for her and she had to go back to England. After that, life seemed to hold nothing for him but gradients and rails and trucks and engines eternal.

In another month or two, however! Ah, after all, he could afford to be generous to that long iron snake lying so black and still in the sunlight.

For behind it lay years of rest in peaceful England—away from this awful sun that scorched and cooked a man up, body and soul—rest—rest. How few men understand the word's true meaning. Rest—rest—and Rose. . . . .

"She loved me. She loved me. I tell you she loved me, and our love was quite straight. There was no wrong, old chap, nothing—only love—love—to——!"

Hendrik started as the voice broke in suddenly on his meditations.

Russell had grown restless again. Then he listened.

Again Russell's voice travelled as far as the verandah. It had grown clearer and stronger, Hendrik thought, but in the still morning, its wail of pathetic agony, sounded oddly strange and eerie.

"There was no wrong, I tell you, nothing but love—love—lov——"

Hendrik smiled a little. Poor old Jack! That was his theme all through the long, weary night. Raving about some woman he loved and some man whom he fancied he had injured.

But the whole thing was merely a phantasy of delirium, thought Hendrik, with a smile. Why, he knew Russell's affairs almost as well as he knew his own. If there had been anything of that sort, he would have known it. Russell was not of the type that trafficked in skeleton closets, more especially where the bones were female.

No! love affairs were not much in the line of John Fraser Russell, engineer by profession and by choice misogynist, cynic and cheerful unbeliever in things generally.

"She loved me! She loved me!" again the moan of Russell's voice, limp and halting between the words, but sounding quite loud and distinct, in the morning stillness. "She loved me, but there was no wrong, and——"

A strange thrill of interest suddenly woke in Hendrik. Instinctively he craned his neck forward to listen.

"They said it was the sun, but they were all wrong! We wanted to play a straight hand with you, old chap, so she went back to England. But there was no wrong—only love, and—pain. Oh, God! the pain—the pain!"

The words with their sudden awful suggestion beat their way into Hendrik's brain like hammers. "They said it was the sun," he repeated, "but—" the cry broke off sharp in his throat. For a moment all extremity of emotion was dulled, his faculties seemed atrophied.

The vision of England faded away slowly—only the glaring plain, and the great black snake winding sinuously across the sand, remained.

Presently he drew himself together, but the movement was slow and old.

Then reason began to assert itself. The suspended thought wave joined the moving current once more and he analysed Russell's words deliberately. He tried to reassure himself—to throw mud on the great doubt that assailed him.

After all, perhaps he had jumped at conclusions too hastily. He tried pathetically to reassure himself, to explain away Russell's awful admission. Delirium builds up incongruous mental fabrics at times. Possibly this was a mere erratic coincidence.

What were the words? The exact words . . . . "said it was the sun, but they were all wrong . . . . we wanted to play a straight hand . . . . so she went back to England . . . . she went back to England."

Vainly did Hendrik try to read inconsistency into the words, but the great doubt only grew stronger and stronger. No sophistry could explain it away. Russell's ravings seemed only too coherent.

"So that was why she went back to England," he muttered, "and I—I never suspected . . . . never suspected."

Five minutes before he felt hot and stifling—now he was deadly cold. The great curling snake out yonder seemed to shimmer in the sunlight. He reeled a little.

"My God," he muttered dully, as he steadied himself against the verandah rail.

They were only two words, but they bore away the soul of a man's happiness.

. . . "Russell, of all men," he thought. "But—no—no!" he suddenly started backward, "no, no, no—it can't be true. I must be mad to-day—I must—I must. The whole thing is merely a coincidence—words without meaning, a chance jumble of delirium, and I am a fool."

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Then his hands dropped heavily by his sides again. The hysterical effort to convince himself was useless. The doubt would be always there. There was no effacing it. Always there—eating away his soul in secret. If only he could settle the matter once and for ever — be *sure*. The doubt would drive him mad—mad—mad.

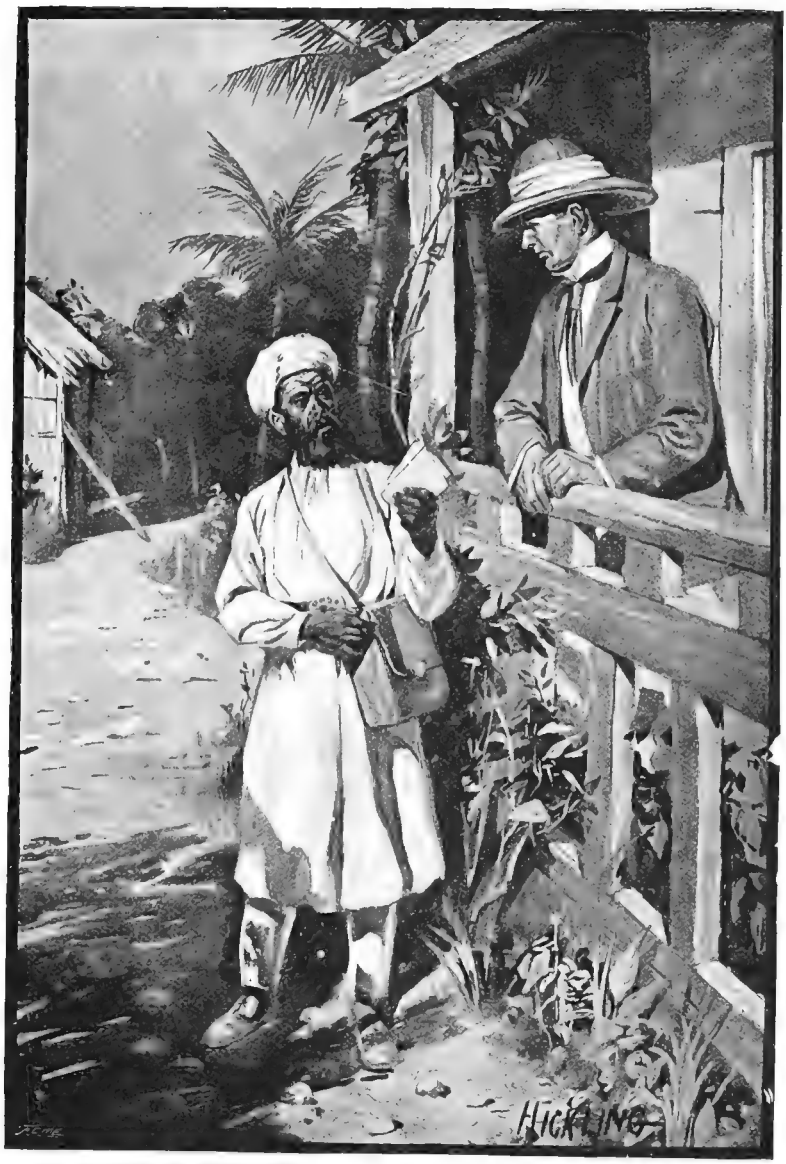
"If only"—he muttered—"if only it could be settled—if only I were sure . . . . if. . . ."

"Morning, sahib. English Mail. Letters two. One sahib, one Russell sahib."

Hendrik turned round. He dimly recognised the old native postman. The latter started as he saw Hendrik's face.

"Are you ill, sahib?" he asked anxiously, "the sahib doctor. . .?"

"No!" said Hendrik, with a queer laugh. "Not ill—no. It is nothing, only. . . ."



He dimly recognised the old native postman.

"She loves me. She loves me," came Russell's moan, once more, "it wasn't the sun—they said so, but they were all wrong. Because she loved me, she went back to England. The sun had nothing to do with it—nothing—nothing!"

Ah!

The cry came through Hendrik's teeth sharply. Then he drew his lips together.

"It is Russell sahib," he said to the old man, "the sun yesterday—head bad," he added, passing his hand mechanically across his forehead.

"Not dying, sahib?" queried the old man anxiously.

Russell was popular in the district.

"No!" replied Hendrik, "not dying. The doctor says he'll be all right in a week. He is talking about—about someone in England."

"Ah! men generally do that when they have been kissed by the Sun-god. They

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want those who love them best when they are stricken. Beware to-day, sahib. . . ."

The old man paused and glanced across the great stretch of dust with the streaks of iron lying black and grim on its surface, then on to the sky-line standing out sharp and clear in the blazing light.

"I am an old man, sahib, and have seen much sun in my time, but if your servant is not a liar, there will be heat to-day, such as my sixty years and five have never known!"

The old man looked up at the sky overhead.

"There is much death up there, sahib," he said. "Take the advice of an old man, and beware. Whom the Sun-god kisses to-day, shall never know kiss of wife again."

"Shall never know kiss of wife again," repeated Hendrik softly, as the old man walked away. "Whom the Sun-god kisses to——"

He flicked the two letters together, as he muttered the words softly. Then he glanced vaguely at their superscriptions.

The first was his own letter. The address, bold and straight was in the handwriting he loved so well. It was from Rose.

Then he glanced at the other. Russell's, and——!

Ah! Hendrik drew his lips together tightly.

"Her writing! Her writing! Her writing!" The phrase hammered itself into his brain, it painted itself on the black sides of the distant trucks—it was writ large in the glaring heavens—everything proclaimed the same thing. "Her writing! Her writing!"

His brain was on fire. The doubt had resolved itself into an obvious certainty, and Russell's delirious words had an awful method in their utterance.

What a fool he had been—a blind, blundering fool!

A savage, unreasoning impulse, begotten of restless agony, impelled him to tear the letter open, and settle the question for all time.

But something held him back. He tried hard to conquer himself—to put away the dastardly impulse. He shrank back. It was such a low-down, mean way. . . . No—no—he could not do it. . . .

"She loves me. She loves me."

For the last time Russell's voice came out through the door faintly. They decided Hendrik for ever.

With a fierce gesture he tore open the envelope and began to read.

Greyer and greyer grew his face as his eye swept the closely written pages and when he looked up, his face was like that of a man who had died and come back again.

Sorrow scratches more lines on our faces, my friend, than even the harsher years, and neither happiness nor misery can be gauged by the clock. They have neither length nor breadth—nothing but magnitude.

Hendrik stared out straight in front. His eyes saw nothing, however—nothing but the words he had just read.

No! There "was no wrong" in it—Russell, in his madness, had spoken the truth. The letter made that obvious enough.

They had loved each other, and when circumstances grew too strong for them, they had tried very bravely to "play a straight hand."

That was why Rose went back to England, not because of the sun, but to save his, Hendrik's, happiness.

But all their striving had been of no use—no use whatever.

Hendrik re-read the concluding sentences again.

"She would never, never be happy any more," the letter said. "They might never meet again, but she would love him for ever and ever."

There was no anger in Hendrik's soul as he mechanically folded the letter, and replaced it in the torn envelope—nothing but blackness and a great misery.

He felt crushed and bruised and strangely old as he looked out across the plain, with the great streak of iron marking the distance.

His work!

Hendrik laughed. It seemed so odd that he should think of work at that moment.

The great snake and all the bridges and gradients to which he had given his best years were of no avail now.

One little sheet of note-paper soiled with a woman's tears had swept them all away. Only a great blank remained.

But there was no anger, he told himself. No anger, whatever—only great sorrow that she should never be happy again.

Poor little woman, of course she could not help loving Russell. He was such a thoroughly good chap in every way, an all round clever fellow, and bound to make his way anywhere. Whereas he, Hendrik, was no good for anything, except mapping out lines of railway and handling a theodolite.

He could never have expected to keep her love—he wasn't the type of man to keep any woman's love—he was only an ordinary sort

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of chap, anyway, but—but he loved her as no woman was ever loved before.

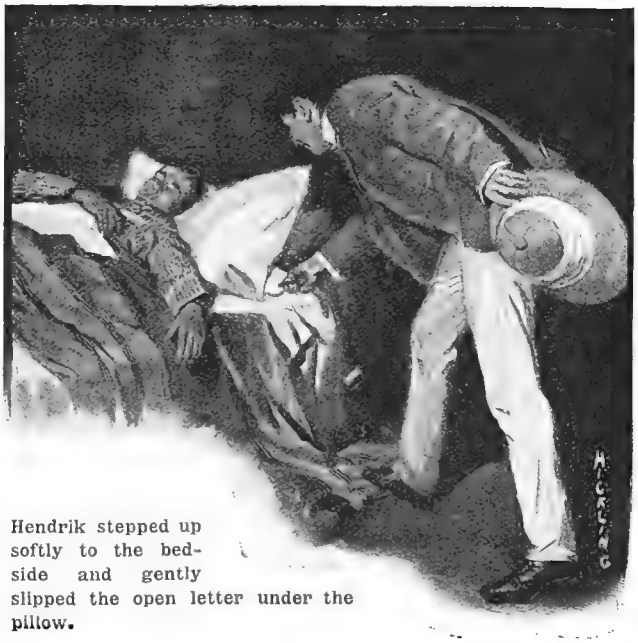
And she would never be happy again—poor little woman—years and years of misery, and lifetimes are such long times when misery checks off the hours.

And he would be the millstone, for ever holding her down under the sea of resignation all the while she craved for the sunlight above—always—always—unless—un——

"Whom the Sun-god kisses to-day shall never know kiss of wife again."

The old man's words were reverberating through Hendrik's brain again—this time with a subtle meaning.

He, Hendrik, was essentially a man of action—it was the key-note of his character, and, although beaten down with misery, he struggled hard to see what was right.



Hendrik stepped up softly to the bedside and gently slipped the open letter under the pillow.

To do something—to decide on some definite course of action was imperative.

And now, with each reverberation of the sentence that rang in his brain, one possible solution of the problem grew clearer and more definite.

And gradually with its growth there came to him a dull sense of relief—of vague gratification at having discovered the way out of a difficulty.

He looked round him dispassionately. In front stretched the mists of eternity—fathomless and appalling—behind lay the road of life along which he had sweated and striven, all so vainly. As he took his final look at its ruined finger posts, one last poor human regret stirred within him for the things that might have been.

If only it had been different—if only she had——

But, there, he drew himself up sharply. It was no use wishing—none whatever. The hour for retrospection was past—it was the hour for action now.

"And it is the best way," he muttered, "the only way. Poor little woman, it will make her happy and——"

He drew his lips together tightly and stepped back into Russell's room.

The latter, exhausted with his raving, had fallen asleep.

Hendrik stepped up softly to the bedside, and gently slipped the open letter under the pillow.

"He will think it was opened during the delirium," he muttered.

Then he stepped softly out of the room and took down his helmet.

The very air seemed pulsating with heat as Hendrik stepped outside into the glaring sunlight, but *he carried his helmet in his hand.*

The burnt-up soil scrunched noisily beneath his feet, and the sun was beating down upon his bare head with the ferocity of a furnace. Little puffs of dust, marking his footfalls, rose, lingered in the air a moment, and then sank. Presently he staggered. The sun was burning up his head. His brain was on fire. An overpowering sense of giddiness compelled him to pause for a moment. Then he set his teeth grimly, and reeled forward again, the helmet still in his hand.

* * * * *

Since its inception the North Indian and Jungle line has lost many men through sunstroke, but never such a capable one as Hendrik. He was a first-class engineer, and left behind him a reputation for much work.

Russell is now in England, married, and supremely happy, but neither he nor his wife ever knew the true story of the Sun-God's kiss.

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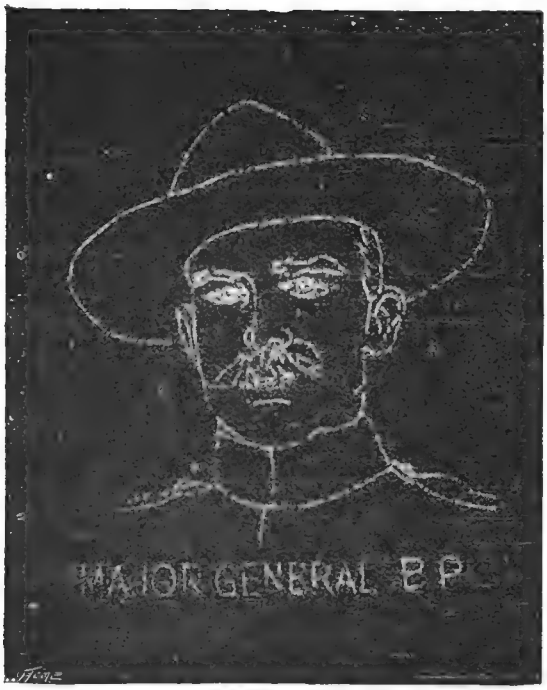


A marvellous portrait in fire of General Baden-Powell.

PICTURES THAT COST OVER A POUND A SECOND.

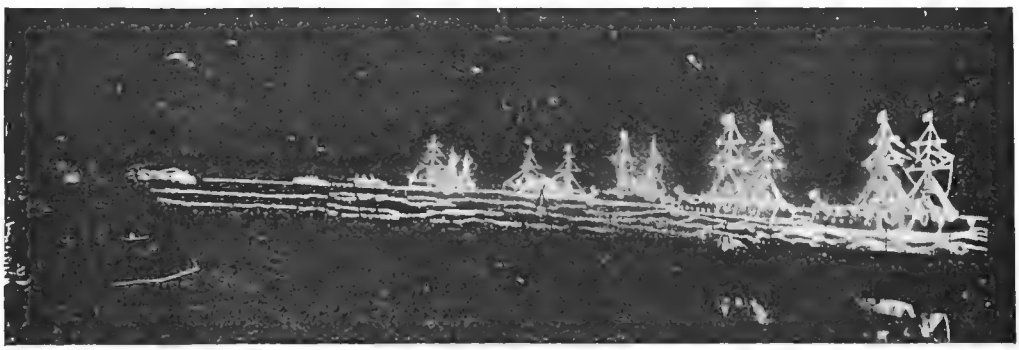
The Marvels of Modern Pyrotechny.

By Charles Banham.

Photographs by permission of Messrs. Brock & Co. and Messrs. Foulsham & Banfield.

The Chinese are the inventors of the pyrotechnic art, but in pyrotechny, as in most things, China has stood still for the last few centuries, and to-day a Chinaman, viewing a firework display in England, is astonished at what we are able to show him. Even the great Li Hung Chang was surprised and delighted beyond measure when, during his visit to this country, some few years since, he was taken, as a special treat, to see the fireworks at the Crystal Palace. He went, and saw, and wondered, and then invited Mr. Brock, the celebrated firework-maker, to go to China and give a few displays.

It was not the squibs and the crackers, the rockets and shells and giant catherine wheels, that aroused Li Hung Chang's admiration. It was the pictures in fire; and of these and their manufacture, and their cost—not of the making of fireworks generally—I am going to treat. While firework displays of the ordinary description rejoiced our ancestors a few centuries back, it was not until 1872, during the period of the Franco-Prussian War, that pictures in fire were introduced. Then, equally as now, the idea was to present something



No item of a firework display is more popular than a naval battle.

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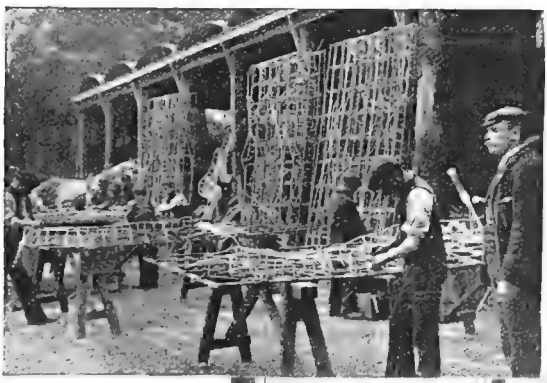
topical; so the first fire-picture ever shown represented the blowing up of a bridge by the Germans. It was a great success, a wonder; the public called for more, and amongst other subjects taken from the war was the burning of Strasbourg Cathedral.

As may be imagined, thirty years have not passed without many discoveries being made as to what it is possible to do with fire by way of providing exciting entertainment, and many improvements have taken place in the construction of fire pictures, their presentation and manipulation. The set-piece of

The King of Denmark and his late Queen.



At work on a section of the huge frame.

1872 was not the colossal affair it is to-day, nevertheless thirty-two men were occupied in merely hoisting it into position. Now, four men can hoist a much larger piece into its place in a few seconds.

A huge picture, almost completed, ready for hoisting.

The designing of the subject is, of course, the first step to be taken, and this is in itself no light or inexpensive labour. Whatever its dimensions are to be, the picture is sketched out the exact size on paper, not only in outline, but also in colour. It is made, in fact, much like an ordinary painting, and this is essential, as it would be impossible otherwise to determine where the various lines of coloured lights are to be placed. As an instance of the cost of these preparatory pictures, it may be mentioned that the one made for a huge set-piece of the "Battle of Trafalgar" cost over £30.

The next step is to divide this large picture up into squares of convenient size, when it is possible to estimate exactly how many feet of wooden laths and cane, what number of nails, the quantity of lances, or coloured lights, and how many miles of quick-match will be required. Then the carpenters set busily to work. The size of the wooden frame is such that it could not, of course, be made all in one piece in a workshop, so it is constructed in pieces of convenient dimensions. When these sections are ready, reference has again to be made to the large sketch, which is now carefully outlined in chalk, section by section, on the square of framework. Over this chalk outline

Laying down the shells.

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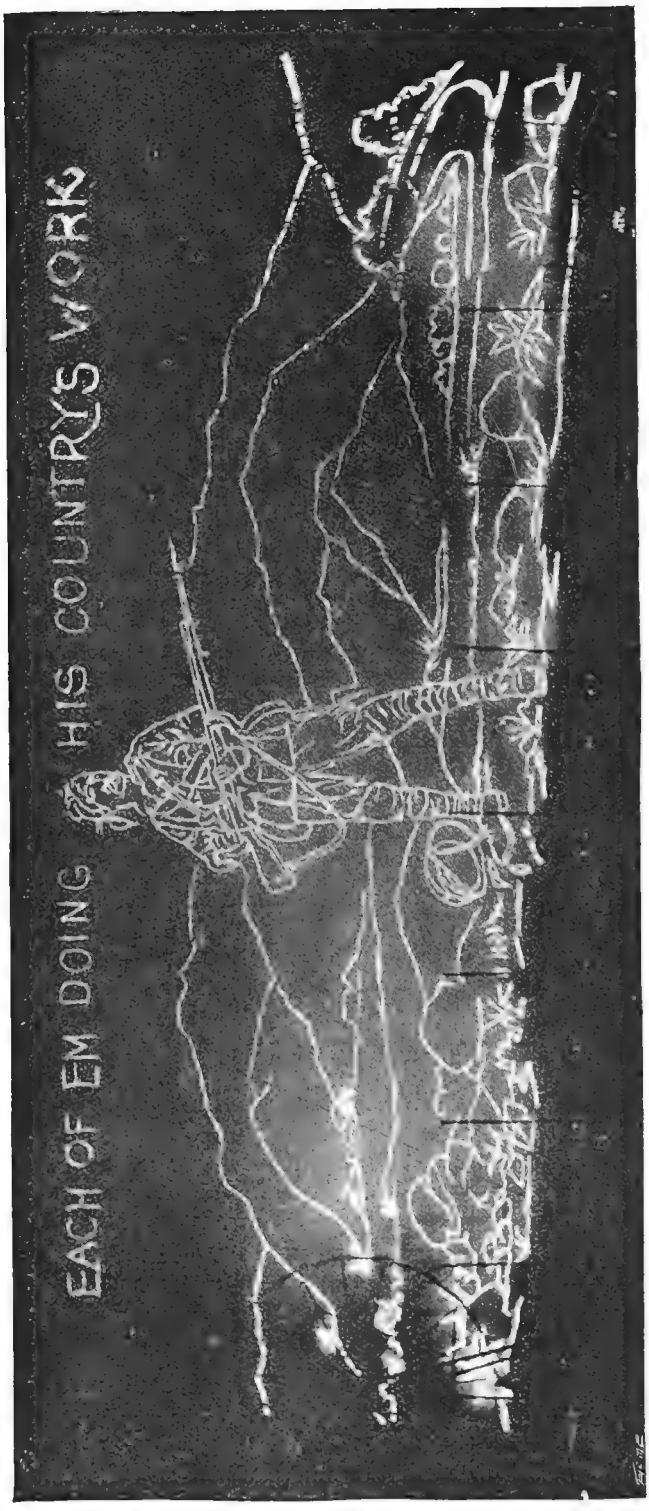

A great fire-picture recently shown at the Crystal Palace.

cane is nailed by an army of boys, and then comes the work of piercing the cane with long nails. Upon these nails are fixed the lances or coloured lights—tubes containing coloured fire—and now the picture is getting very near completion. All, indeed, that remains to be done is to connect the lances with the quick-match, fix the three firing rockets in position, and after fastening the pieces together at the foot of the scaffold, the whole picture is hauled up ready.

However, it is much easier to describe the performance of this work than to execute it, and the description is apt to convey the idea that building the picture is a light and easy task; but, in fact, it is quite otherwise. Take the size of it, for instance. It is probably 200 yards in length, and contains 40,000 to 50,000 square feet of frame work.

Imagine the immensity of a picture built up on this square, and think of the miles of cane to cover the outline, the thousands of coloured lights, the miles of quick-match that must be used! The cost of introducing a new picture is never less than £300, and sometimes over £400, for there is, of course, the material constituting the background to be paid for, as well as the labour for putting the whole together. The subsequent reproductions of the fiery scene are given at a cost of £50 to £70, according to the size.

The largest picture in fire ever produced in this or any other country was put on at the Crystal Palace at the time of the Hispano-American war. It was called the Battle of Manilla, and was built upon 50,000 square feet of framework. It had a total length of over one-eighth of

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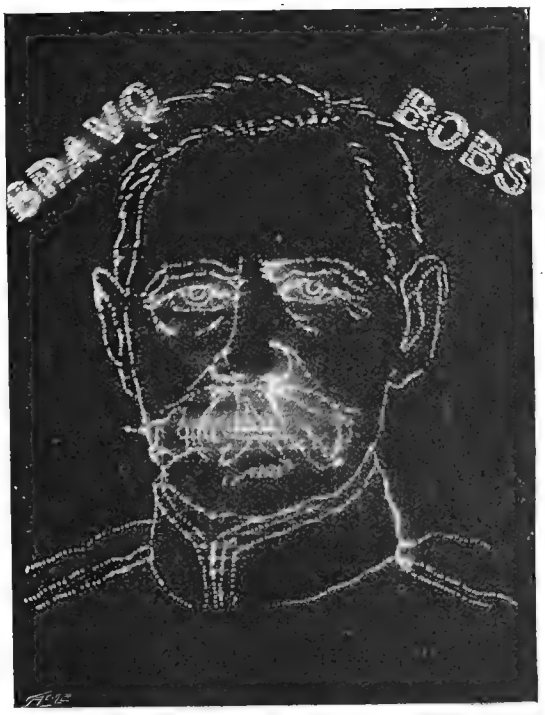
a mile. Thirteen warships were introduced into the fight, and in firing their guns no fewer than 500 shells were thrown. To give the whole picture nearly one mile of coloured lights of thirty different shades were utilised, and these were connected by no less than ten miles of quick match. It was a beautiful sight whilst it lasted, this fiery fight upon a sea of flame—shells bursting through the air and crashing into ships, and all the splendour and horrors of a naval combat intensified by the unique circumstances under which it was rendered. It cost £800, and lasted two and a-half minutes! Thus it will be seen that a first night at the Crystal Palace is a costly affair, running, in fact, into over five pounds per second!



A realistic portrait of Lord Roberts which has elicited hundreds of thousands of admiring cheers.

Marine subjects lend themselves perhaps better than any other for pyrotechnical display, and certainly are always popular. The Battle of Trafalgar was a big success, costing some 50*s.* for every yard of its 207 yards length. In this picture there were several miles of cane and quick-match utilised, while each display consumed 400 gross of coloured lights.

A very effective subject was that entitled "Man the Lifeboat." The firing rockets coursed through the blackness over the framework, leaving their trail behind them where they had kindled the torches, and in the time one takes to draw a breath there sprang up a cliff crowned with houses, at whose base rose and fell and roared the stormy sea. Then out in the wild waters sprang into view the ship in distress, and a second later was seen the lifeboat struggling out to its aid. Amidst the roaring of the storm, the crashing of thunder, the flashing of lightning, the boat struggled across the watery waste, steadily, slowly, but surely, now on the crest of a wave, now hidden from sight in the hollows, and at last reaches the wrecked vessel. Then all is darkness as before.

This brings us to the subject of the mechanical, or perhaps it would be better to say the moving parts of fire pictures. How did that lifeboat creep out from the base of the cliff? How was it rocked on the waves? Well, the lifeboat itself is only a wooden outline manned by wooden figures, the whole being illuminated with flaring lances. It runs on a tramway, and its motive power is human, for there are a couple of men behind it who, while pushing it forward, impart to it the up and down motion of the waves.

It is the same with the bicycle races, the fighting cocks, the boxing men, the dancing girl, the jugglers. Bicycle and rider are made of wood, and when alight are rushed along the track by the manipulator. It might be supposed that this is dangerous work for the man in the rear, but the only inconvenience he is likely to suffer, arises from the smoke, for he is clad from head to foot in an asbestos suit, and, as everyone is aware, asbestos is neither flammable nor does it allow the heat to penetrate. So there really is no danger.

The portraits in fire are built up in exactly the same manner as the set-pieces, and, shown in various colours, are really very effective, and, what is more, can always be readily recognised. Portraits of the Royal family and of our various national heroes are always largely appreciated. It is not often that anything goes wrong with any part of the entertainment, but on one occasion when the crowd were cheering the portrait of a well-known Royal warrior the

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cheers suddenly changed to roars of laughter, for his Royal Highness was presented to their gaze with a *green nose*. The coloured lances had got mixed.

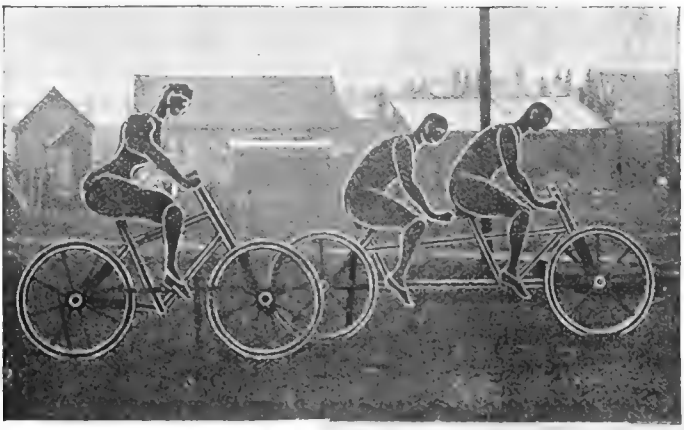
As to the sums expended upon firework displays on various occasions a few figures cannot fail to prove interesting. When we celebrate Guy Fawkes Day it is estimated we spend £100,000 every year, while on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee no less than £250,000 were expended. When Her Majesty was proclaimed Empress of India, Delhi had a display which cost £3000, and India spent in fireworks, during the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1875, over £20,000.

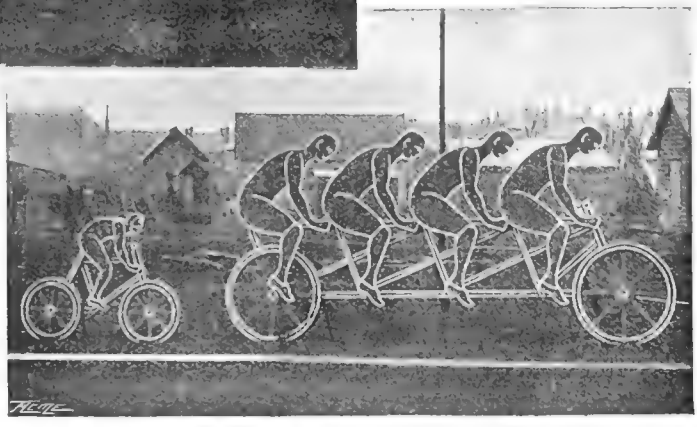
It came as something of a surprise when Mr. Brock informed me that there are numbers of wealthy individuals who annually spend small fortunes in gratifying their peculiar desires for firework displays. This constitutes their hobby, and when they devote one evening a week to it, the yearly bill runs into thousands of pounds.

Lately the factory at South Norwood has been working to its utmost limits to satisfy the extraordinary demand for fireworks of all descriptions, which will burst into a blaze of magnificence next June, when the Coronation of the King takes place. That will be a great occasion for fireworks, as most coronations have been, both at home and abroad. Then, again, Messrs. Brock have had to cope with the extensive colonial demand created by the tour of the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York; and there are still large colonial orders on hand for our sons beyond the seas, who intend to celebrate the forthcoming Coronation.

The Brock family have had a close intimacy with pyrotechnics for some seven generations past, and Brocks and the Crystal Palace have been inseparable since 1865, when they gained in open competition the position of pyrotechnists to that well-known amusement house at Sydenham. Then, of course, the output was not so large as now, when no less than 500 tons of fireworks, valued at a million sterling, represents the year's work, nor was the variety of fireworks manufactured so great as at present. For to-day you can take your choice of 600 different kinds.

Messrs. Brocks are proud of the fact that they have received so much patronage from Royalty, home and foreign. The German Emperor, as might be expected in one who delights in all things gorgeous and dramatic, is an enthusiastic lover of firework displays. He has more than once been present at the Crystal Palace show. Perhaps the most costly display ever given was that at Lisbon in 1888, on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen of Sweden. It cost £5000 a month for many months to prepare it, and the show was such as those who witnessed it will never forget. But what a waste! For half an hour of superb magnificence an expenditure of thousands of pounds.





These two photographs show the framework to which the fireworks are attached for a cycle race. The cyclists ride on the machines behind the frames, and their legs, arms, and bodies being attached to the dummies, cause the fiery outlines of the latter to work realistically.

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A CHAMPION IN MINIATURE

By E. M. Jameson.

Miss Amelia Bryanston and her small nephew were seated at breakfast when the letters arrived. Geoff watched the opening of them with anxiety, and his legs now dangled impatiently to and fro while Miss Amelia assisted herself to a second cup of tea, and sipped it in a leisurely manner.

Each morning had brought fresh disappointment in its train, not only to him, but to Teddy Wynterton on the other side of the garden wall.

The sun shone in at the dining-room window, and made a splash of scarlet on the wall dedicated to the portrait of the master of the house. Geoff looked up now with adoring eyes at the *débonnaire* scarlet-coated soldier father whom he could not remember.

The frank blue eyes seemed to smile back at him, and Geoff took a fresh lease of patience. There were five letters on the table-cloth, and Miss Amelia was now opening the fifth. Then she, too, glanced at Major Bryanston's portrait, gathered up her letters and rose from the table.

"You may go, Geoffrey," she said. "Your father will be here this afternoon at five o'clock."

The next moment Geoff had vanished to seek the friend of his bosom. Aunt Amelia did not approve of Teddy Wynterton, so all intercourse had to be conducted from a perilous position on the boundary wall near the potting shed, where their respective gardeners had good-naturedly placed ladders.

Teddy's ruddy head was already bobbing excitedly above the wall, while his tattered elbows were determinedly dug into the mortar. Archdeacon Wynterton, his father, was not a rich man, and Mrs. Wynterton, with the best intentions, found it difficult to cope with more than the stocking mending. Teddy's elbows were a continual puzzle to her, but then she had no conception of the ruggedness of the garden wall. Teddy and

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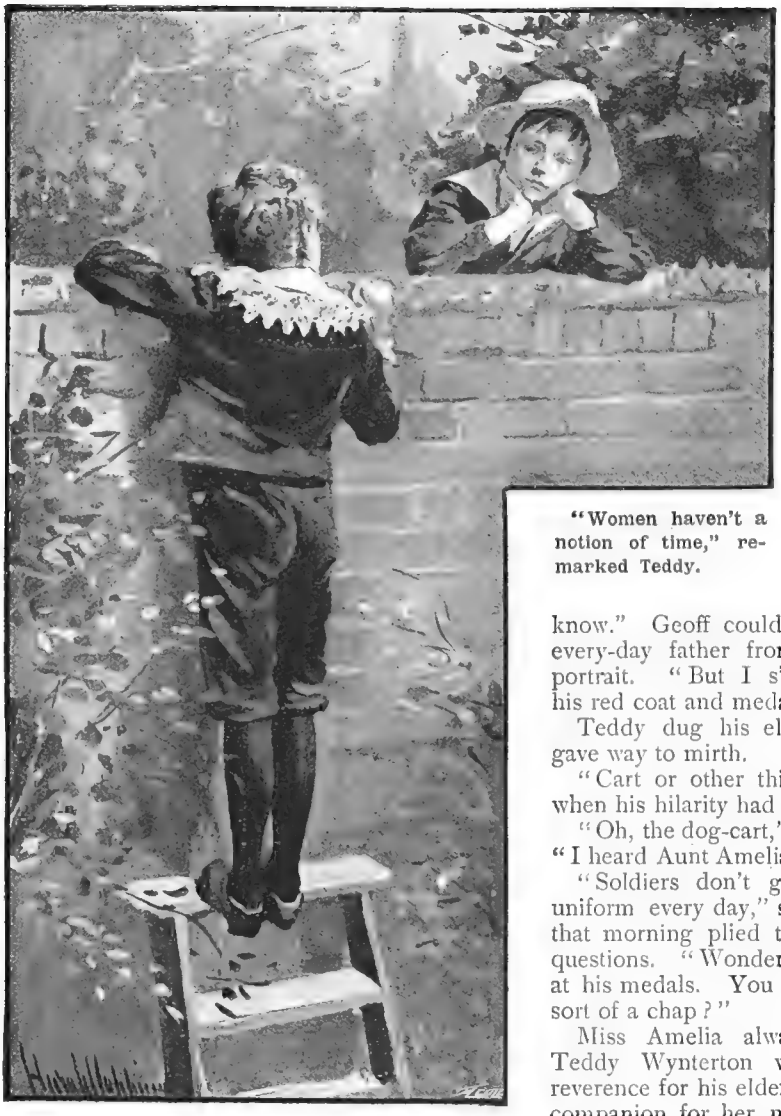

"Women haven't a notion of time," remarked Teddy.

Geoff had worked conscientiously to remove the fragments of broken bottle, but several portions were beyond their best endeavours, so Teddy went on his way, surprisingly thin in the elbow, but unashamed. The ladders were too short to allow of a sitting posture, but there are few things devoid of flaws, and in the vicissitudes of a large family Teddy had learned the benefits of philosophy.

"Well?" he demanded when Geoff had reached the topmost rung.

"Coming to-day at five o'clock," said Geoff breathlessly.

"There ain't a train at five o'clock," said Teddy with the superiority of eight years over seven.

"But Aunt Amelia——"

"Women haven't a *notion* of time," remarked Teddy—the Archdeacon had made the self-same remark at breakfast that morning—"She means the four-thirty. What's he coming in?"

"Aunt Amelia won't tell me things I want to know." Geoff could never dissociate his every-day father from the father of the portrait. "But I s'pose he'll come in his red coat and medals."

Teddy dug his elbows in harder and gave way to mirth.

"Cart or other thing?" he demanded when his hilarity had subsided.

"Oh, the dog-cart," said Geoff hurriedly. "I heard Aunt Amelia telling Bates——"

"Soldiers don't go about dressed in uniform every day," said Teddy, who had that morning plied the Archdeacon with questions. "Wonder if he'll let us look at his medals. You say he looks a jolly sort of a chap?"

Miss Amelia always maintained that Teddy Wynterton was too lacking in reverence for his elders to prove a suitable companion for her nephew, and, truth to tell, the bump of veneration was not largely developed in the Archdeacon's youngest hope.

Before Geoff could reply, the loud ringing of a bell was borne upon the breeze.

"There's the bell for me," he said, and retreated with all speed to his daily penance of lessons with Aunt Amelia. How he envied Teddy when he saw him trudging home from school with his satchel on his back and cheerful face, whose griminess caused Miss Amelia to shudder and thank Providence that she was not as others—meaning Mrs. Wynterton.

But Teddy was a hero infallible in Geoff's

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eyes, for had he not begun to learn Latin this term?

That afternoon Teddy sought ambush in a tree adjacent to Aunt Amelia's entrance gate, where he contentedly munched an apple and awaited developments, making a rough calculation meanwhile between the speed of the Archdeacon's fat cob and that of the chestnut owned by Miss Amelia.

He was softly whistling "See the Conquering Hero," when the dog-cart swept round the corner. Teddy gave one glance at the face of the man in a tweed coat who held the reins, looked again, then descended from his eyrie with an expression of blank amazement on his chubby features. He remained in this condition during tea, and did not ask for a second helping of jam, an omission which, to his mother's mind, denoted the approach of malady. As he laid his head on the pillow he solved the problem:

"That glum-looking chap can't be Geoff's father, he must have sent somebody else;" and so saying he fell asleep.

For the next day or two he watched in vain for Geoff from the boundary wall.

No Geoff appeared.

He, too, had received a rude awakening, far rougher, indeed, than Teddy's, for it went deeper in the more sensitive nature. Ever since he could remember anything he had hoped and longed for his father's homecoming, the father he knew and loved only through his portrait. He could not associate this stern-faced silent man with his father. Those were dark days to Geoff, and he deliberately cut himself off from his one friend; it was too bitter to remember all the plans they had made.

Teddy could see him in the distance walking moodily about the garden, keeping out of hailing distance, more solitary by far in his present condition than in all the years of his lonely childhood. At the expiration of two days Geoff could bear it no longer, and one morning found him on the topmost rung facing Teddy, who could not refrain from lively questionings.

"Aunt Amelia says he's my father," said Geoff, with a choke in his voice that he hoped Teddy did not hear, "and I s'pose she ought to know."

"P'raps he's jollier than he looks?" suggested Teddy, with an attempt at consolation which even to his mind appeared futile.

"He's—he's worse," said Geoff, swallowing another sob, and working out a bit of glass that had resisted the efforts of weeks; "he never smiles even, and spends nearly all day in the library smoking."

Teddy felt a prick of conscience; he remembered the time when he had envied Geoff his soldier father, and wished his own had not been born an archdeacon. "I'm jolly glad, now, he was," he said half-aloud, and tried not to see a tear that splashed on the wall between them. Geoff hoped it had not been noticed, knowing that Teddy held such weakness in abhorrence.

Teddy's tact had its limits. There were problems that must be solved.

"D'ye mean to say he's never said anything about the pony?" he asked in an amazed tone.

Geoff shook his head. The pony was a dream never likely to come true.

"And hasn't he told your Aunt Amelia to buy you *real* boy's clothes?" persisted Teddy, getting the knife in deeper, for Geoff's tuckers and lace collars and velvets were the abasement of his soul, since knowing Teddy Wynterton.

Words failed, a second tear splashed between.

"Well, I'm—*blowed!*" ejaculated Teddy, throwing refinement to the winds, "don't you ever ask him things at breakfast?"

The Archdeacon was an embodied encyclopædia at that meal.

"I'm—I'm—I'm afraid of him," sobbed Geoff, all the pent-up disappointment finding vent in a sob that almost shook him to pieces. "I wish I had a father like yours. I used to feel very sorry yours was an Archdeacon and had to wear ugly black clothes—and gaiters—and things—but he plays cricket with you and tells you things you want to know"—and Geoff laid his curly head upon the rugged mortar in an abandonment of desolation that alarmed Teddy.

"I say, *drop it*," he said remonstratingly. "You just buck up and forget all about it. I daresay he'll get jollier."

Teddy's phraseology was an unknown language to Geoff, but he felt that it was well meant, and when they parted he was the more cheerful of the two.

Teddy felt in much perplexity of mind. It was Saturday, and he had the afternoon free. He roamed about the garden with his hands in his pockets, and presently saw Miss Amelia's carriage, containing herself and a much-befrilled and desolate Geoff, turn out of the drive.

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The next moment Teddy had dashed back into the house, butting the Archdeacon in the apron *en route.*

"Halloa, halloa, what's the matter?" asked that good-natured personage. But Teddy only murmured something about washing and hands, and continued on his course. The Archdeacon held a theory that young people should be allowed free margin in assisting their own developments, but this was a little too much. "Wash his hands—and of his own accord!" he murmured. "That boy is going to be something out of the common."

Meantime Teddy made his way with a resolute step and a sinking heart up the Bryanston drive. Even he felt that the condition of his elbows detracted from his dignity, but this was no time to think of appearances.

His old friend Bates was airing his portly person at the hall door. Teddy longed to greet him in the usual manner, but felt that to do so would be fatal to his mission. Bates looked down with an indulgent smile, forgetting his place in the surprise of the moment.

"Bless me, Master Teddy, now who'd a thought of seeing *you* here; Master Geoffrey is out."

"I didn't come to see him," said Teddy keeping his eyes fixed on Bates' waistcoat buttons and longing for the old friendly converse.

Bates drew himself up.

"Perhaps it's the master you've called to see," he remarked ironically. "Do you happen to have a card with you, sir?"

This was more than Teddy could endure. "*Do* let me in, Bates—*dear* old Bates."

Bates sniffed; there was mystery in the air, but the whole Wynterton family was dear to Bates.

Perhaps he comprehended, perhaps he only surmised; but to Teddy's relief he nodded in a knowing kind of way and moved across the hall.

"Mr. Edward Wynterton to see you, sir," he said, and stood aside to let Teddy enter.

Major Bryanston looked up from his letter-writing with a frown that died away when he caught sight of his visitor. He rose. Bates had disappeared and Teddy felt very small standing alone in a wilderness of Turkey carpet.

"Did you want to see me?" asked the Major kindly, wondering who his small visitor could be, and inwardly amused at the antagonism in Teddy's sturdy figure and blue eyes. "Won't you sit down? What can I do for you?"

Teddy sat down in one huge leather-covered arm-chair, while Major Bryanston subsided into another.

There was a pause.

Geoff's father *was* very stern and unapproachable, yet there was a strength in the soldierly figure and a resolution in the keen blue eyes that roused all Teddy's boyish admiration.

"I'm Teddy Wynterton," he said at last, in desperation.

"Any relation of my old friend and neighbour the Archdeacon?"

"He's—he's my father," exclaimed Teddy, sitting erect and squaring his shoulders. "I didn't think you knew him."

"He's the best friend I ever had," said the Major heartily—"the best man living! Come and shake hands. I only wish Geoffrey may have such a friend when he needs one."

Teddy thrilled with pride. He literally went over to the enemy and shook hands, then retreated once more to the fastness of his arm-chair.

"I used to be sorry my father was an Archdeacon instead of a soldier," he said, "but—" He stopped suddenly and reddened.

"But now you're not sorry," asked Major Bryanston. "Well, I don't think you need be; a nice Archdeacon is hard to beat."

He saw that Teddy had something on his mind. "Did you come to see Geoffrey? He has gone out to drive with his aunt."

"I saw them go," said Teddy eagerly. "She—I mean Miss Amelia—doesn't let me come here."

"Doesn't let you come here?" exclaimed the Major. "Why?"

"It doesn't matter," said Teddy growing scarlet, lest he had been telling tales out of school. "I don't mind, but——" he grew desperate, then suddenly went over and stood by the Major's knee.

"It's about Geoff I came," he said, his plain sturdy face alight with resolution. "He's—he's—oh, he's so *jolly miserable.*"

"Jolly miserable?" echoed the Major. "Why?"

"He hoped when you came you'd let him do things like other boys," blurted Teddy, feeling retreat to be impossible now; "he

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wanted to ask you to give him *real* boy's clothes, not those *beastly* lace tuckers and things she makes him wear, and he wants to ride bareback like me on father's cob, and play cricket, and go to school, and—and *lots* of things——" Teddy paused, out of breath; the Major was silent out of sheer amazement. His glance went to the portrait of a lovely girl, with soft brown eyes, that stood upon the writing table.

His face contracted with an expression that made all Teddy's fear of him die away.

"But Geoff has never told me all this," he said quietly.

"He's too afraid to tell you," said Teddy candidly; "you were so different to your picture that—that—well—you—know——"

"Yes, I know," said the Major, and drew a deep breath. Then he put his hand on Teddy's shoulder: "When that portrait was painted, Teddy, I was the happiest man alive. You won't understand, but when Geoff was born the greatest sorrow of my life came upon me" —he paused, his eyes darkened, and again his glance went to the portrait on the writing-table. He drew a deep breath and walked over to the window.

"Geoff shall have his clothes and his pony, and his cricket and his school," he said, "and we'll make a man of him between us, Teddy. He shall not be afraid of me any longer. I believe Bates has some exceptionally fine apples laid by somewhere, and then we'll go and see your father and talk over old times.

"He was a big boy when I was a little chap, Teddy, and it was he who first taught me to use a rod."

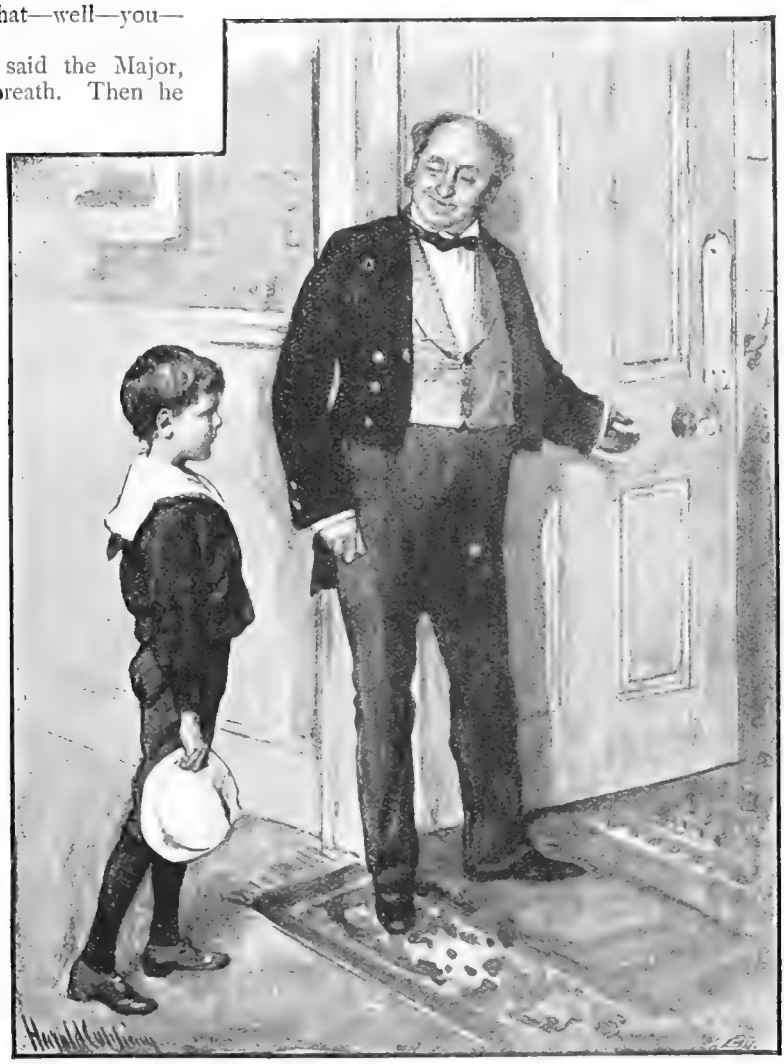
"He never fishes now," said Teddy with some resentment—"and he only lets me fish in the duck-pond."

"Do you think I'd do as well, Teddy?"

"*Rather!*" responded Teddy.

The Major patted the rough head.

"One good turn deserves another," he said, which ambiguous remark Teddy certainly failed to understand, but, nevertheless, thoroughly appreciated.



"Mr. Edward Wynterton to see you, sir."

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SMILES AND SMILES

When politeness requires a smile.

"Don't be silly!" and she smiles coyly.

She knows no moderation, and amusement does not improve her face.

She finds the joke really funny.

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They smile like this when they see their rivals worsted.

"Funny? I call it simply contemptible!" and she smiles.

Is there anything so distressing as the foolish smile?

She has known trouble, and her very smile is sad.

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A MATTER OF ASSURANCE

By W. Alexander Ross

I.

"Your change, sir," murmured the deft, obsequious waiter, placing his salver noiselessly on the spotless white damask.

Horton Hoadley gathered up the little pile of gold and silver coins that lay on the receipted bill and smiled grimly across the table at his fellow diner and guest.

"What's left of my last ten pound note," he remarked laconically, as he thrust the money into his pocket.

The other man nodded and pulled hard at his moustache, as he leaned back in his chair and let his gaze drift idly round the brilliant throng of diners in the lavishly decorated restaurant of the Savoy.

"Ah!" he said at last with a sigh, "and it is good-bye to all this inside a week—the only life that is worth living."

"Yes," echoed Hoadley slowly, "the only life worth living. But suppose, Brinkworth," he went on—"I only say suppose—there was a sum of say £5000 available for either of us on the death of the other, should you think it good enough to toss for who should have the money?"

Brinkworth stared hard at Hoadley's lean, hard face.

"You always were a demon for desperate devices. What is behind your question?"

Hoadley sipped his coffee with deadly deliberateness before replying.

"Sudden death for the loser—five thousand pounds sterling for the winner."

"It sounds mad, but there is method in it. We are both men—well, we will say men of forty. We have seen it out as much as any two men in London. We have had a long innings, and now we are at the absolute end of our tether. It is a case of sandwich-boards in the near future, and a workhouse infirmary at the finish for the pair of us, unless—" and he paused.

"Unless what?"

"Unless one of us dies within a week, leaving the other to live another five thousand pounds' worth of life. How does it strike you?"

"Dying is so confoundedly unpleasant," objected Brinkworth.

"My dear chap, we have got to die to this sort of life within a week, as you so very pertinently observed just now. In a month we shall be as dead as doornails to the world that has known us all our lives. It is merely a question of degree in dying."

Brinkworth did not answer for a few seconds. He looked round him again. The crowd of fair women—their sparkling jewels—the glitter of the silver—the red glow of the candle shades—the scent of the rich hued flowers, and the silver ripple of women's laughter mingling with the wailing of the violins in the orchestra—the luxury of it all came to him with a vivid reality it had never had before.

"You are right, Hoadley," he exclaimed hoarsely, "let us get out of this—out into the air—out into the night!"

They were well out into the busy Strand, going Charing Crosswards, before either of them spoke again, and then it was Brinkworth who broke the silence.

"Let us get down on to the Embankment—it is quieter and cooler there than here," he said.

They turned down Villiers Street, and then strolled slowly towards Westminster Bridge.

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"And what fiendish plan is this of yours with death for one and five thousand pounds for the other of us?"

"Nothing fiendish at all, but, on the contrary, something disgustingly simple and prosaic. It is merely a matter of assurance."

"Assurance?" queried Brinkworth in a puzzled tone.

"Life," laconically explained the other.

Brinkworth laughed derisively.

"I thought you had hit on something brilliant," he said shortly, "Life assurance! —I wonder what life assurance office in the universe would be insane enough to accept either of us as a risk. And suppose they would, where is the premium to come from? Our joint funds would go a long way in paying the premium on a £5000 policy. There isn't five thousand pence in your precious idea."

"Got any more objections?" coolly asked Hoadley.

"Lots. How about the dying? The loser can't die to order unless you insure for a suicide risk."

"My dear old chap, your arguments are unanswerable. But they do not apply to my scheme. Let's pull up for a bit. The cool air from the river tempers the late June blast to the perspiring man. And over the way is New Scotland Yard. There is a certain appropriateness in discussing my little plan right under its very shadow."

"Hang the appropriateness! What's the scheme?" replied Brinkworth in mollified tones, stopping and propping himself up against the parapet.

"Railway accident assurance at one guinea per thousand pound policy."

"That is all right, but how about the railway accident? The man who has got to be in it may die of old age before it comes off. Seven million journeys is the average for a fatal accident to the individual. Better have a final flutter with our last few sovereigns and then go in search of the sandwich-boards straight away. Daresay they aren't half bad when you get used to them."

Hoadley did not reply for a few moments, but leant on the parapet looking out over the black river with its blinking reflection of the lights on bridge and Embankment.

"My dear Brinkworth," he said softly at last, "we must arrange the accident."

II.

"Here goes for the choice of first call and the manner of the toss," said Hoadley, sending a sovereign whizzing ceilingwards.

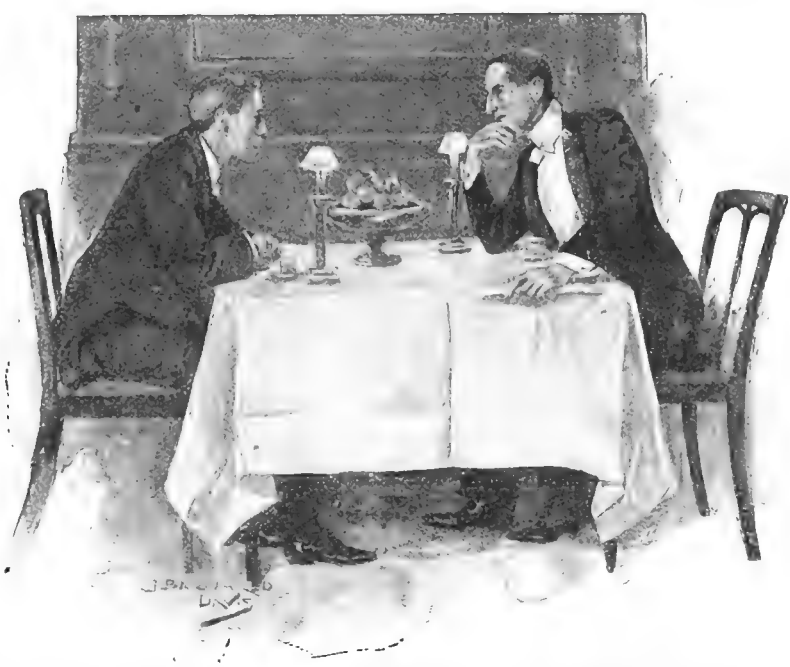
"Woman!" exclaimed Brinkworth.

The coin dropped noiselessly out of sight in the shadow of the table on the thick Oriental carpet — Hoadley's rooms were luxuriously furnished.

The spinner of the coin fumbled nervously after his vesta box. Brinkworth, impatient of the delay, pushed the table aside, and together they bent over the coin.

"Yours!" ejaculated Hoadley, his clean-shaven face a shade sallower than it was before.

"What is it to be—best two out of three,



"Sudden death for the loser—five thousand pounds sterling for the winner."

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or a single toss and sudden death?" he demanded.

"Sudden death," replied Brinkworth with an hysterical laugh; "it is more appropriate."

Hoadley echoed the laugh in a hollow sort of fashion.

He put the sovereign down on the table, went over to the sideboard and brought out a bottle of champagne.

"The last of its race—we will drink to the coin that holds wealth for one of us!"

"And death for the other," added Brinkworth, a slight tremor perceptible in his voice.

The silence of the room seemed to get on their nerves while Hoadley was fiddling about with the champagne opener, for they both started violently when the cork flew out with a report that sounded like a revolver shot. Even the gentle hissing of the foaming wine as it was poured into the glasses had its suggestiveness—at least for Brinkworth, who muttered something about its reminding him of the sound of escaping steam.

In silence they drank to the piece of gold that lay glittering dully on the table. Then Hoadley picked it up.

"Well, here she goes," he said in a shaky voice, and up went the fateful coin towards the ceiling once more.

"Woman again!" gasped out Brinkworth as they watched it rise and followed its yellow flutter downwards.

They sat gazing at each other for some moments after it had dropped. The die was cast.

"We won't look yet," said Hoadley at length.

"No!" replied Brinkworth quickly, "we'll finish the champagne first."

They filled their glasses.

"It will be a queer ending for one of us, Hoadley."

"Ah!" assented Hoadley as he brought out a sheet of paper with a roughly sketched plan on it. "We had better go through this again. It will be easier now than after—"

He left the sentence unfinished, and pointed over the edge of the table in the direction of the coin.

"Here is the plantation which runs right up to the railway line. You know the footpath leading to it from Hoadley village through Hoadley Park.

"Good lord!" he broke off suddenly, "What a screed there will be in the County papers about the tragic death of one of the Hoadleys of Hoadley if it is I.

"I wonder if my Squire brother will have me, the ne'er do-well of the family, interred in the family vault. But to come back to the plan. This is where the path turns off—hang it, you must know it well enough! We have been through it often enough in the old days with our guns."

"Yes, I know it, old chap. We didn't think then——"

"Just as well we did not. You know how the line swings round by the plantation to the mouth of the tunnel. There is a pile of sleepers always stacked at this point. You haul one gently down, place it carefully on the inner rail, and when the express comes round the curve at forty miles an hour, she jumps the sleeper and the rails, and comes off at a tangent, crash into the face of the entrance to the tunnel. The guard's van and the carriage behind it will telescope between the engine and the heavy Pullman sleeping saloon and —" he shrugged his shoulders significantly.

Brinkworth finished the sentence.

"The insurance policies will be due."

Moved by a common impulse they gripped each other by the hand.

"We have been the best of friends," said Hoadley.

"The best of friends," echoed the other huskily.

He picked up the champagne bottle and held it up to the light.

"Empty!" he said.

They got up and crossed the room to where the coin lay and stooped over it. A dull purple flush suffused Hoadley's sallow face. He clutched the other man by the shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Brinkworth, old chap," he said.

"It's all right—it had to be one of us," was the reply that came from Brinkworth's pallid lips.

III.

The next day was a busy one for Hoadley and Brinkworth. It started with a hunt through the directory for the addresses of the accident assurance companies, and the number of these was in the nature of a revelation to the searchers.

"There was more money in this than I thought," remarked Hoadley somewhat ruefully.

"I don't mind an extra thousand or two, old man," said Brinkworth, with the reckless prodigality of a man who was doomed. He was beginning to appreciate the dramatic side of his position as the loser of the toss.

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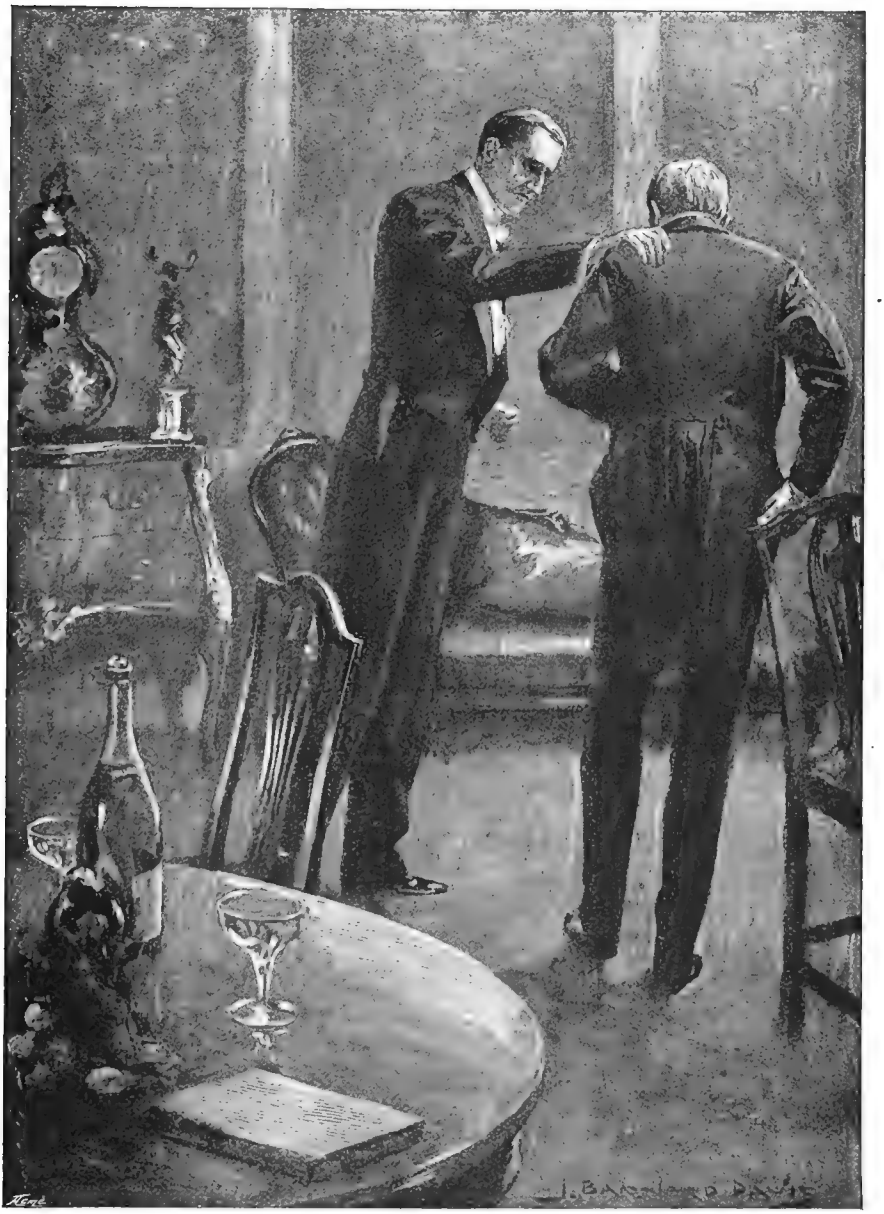

"I'm sorry, Brinkworth, old chap," he said.

"No——a bargain is a bargain. Five thousand was the stake and five thousand it remains. Besides our funds won't run to an unlimited number of policies."

Next they went to a solicitor, where Brinkworth's last will and testament was drawn up signed and duly witnessed. It made Hoadley his sole legatee, and secured the proceeds of the insurance policies to that individual. That concluded, as Brinkworth remarked, the formal business in connection with their little arrangement. They had taken out the policies on the road to the solicitor's office.

They dined luxuriously at the Savoy early in the evening. Hoadley ate but little, and scarcely opened his lips. Brinkworth, on the other hand, seemed absolutely to revel in

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the meal and its surroundings. He went steadily through the menu with the discriminating keenness of an epicure. He talked incessantly, and his conversation was full of oblique references to the tragedy they had planned for an hour or two later. Possibly the fact that he drank a good deal of champagne had something to do with this.

Three-quarters of an hour later saw them getting out of a hansom at Euston. Brinkworth was still cheerful and his companion still monosyllabic.

He did not find his tongue until they were standing by the door of the train that was to take him on in advance to place the sleeper on the line.

"Eight-forty your train starts—the Irish mail—you have only got forty minutes to wait. I shall get to Hoadley Junction half an hour in front of the mail. You will pass through at ten-thirty. You will not forget," said Hoadley.

"I shall not forget. It is all I need remember now," was the quiet rejoinder.

Hoadley took his foot off the carriage step and laid his hand heavily on the other man's shoulder.

"No!" said Brinkworth, before he could open his lips," we must go through with it now. It is the only thing to be done."

"Going on, sir—step in please!" interrupted the guard.

"Good-bye," cried Brinkworth.

The slamming of the carriage door and the shrill scream of the guard's whistle drowned Hoadley's reply, and the next moment the train was on the move.

Brinkworth watched the red tail-light drift unsteadily into the darkness out of sight, and then strolled back to the buffet, where he purchased the most expensive cigar they could find for him, ordered a brandy and soda, and proceeded to make himself as comfortable as circumstances would admit, in order to wile away the forty minutes he had to wait.

But the time dragged terribly, and presently he gave up the buffet as a bad job and strolled out into the station.

He found a good deal to interest him at the bookstall—particularly the illustrated papers.

"There will be a considerable amount of railway accident in them next week," he mused sardonically. "There is not another man in London at the present time who knows that."

Presently his attention was attracted by the various periodical publications which combine light reading with railway assurance, and a happy thought struck him. He purchased the whole series of them.

"By Jove!" he chuckled, as he walked off with them, "won't these be a pleasant surprise for poor old Hoadley—nearly another four thousand pounds between them? He will not feel so much now paying the few odd hundreds I owe."

He made his way to the platform from which the Irish mail was to start, in good time, and found it intensely interesting to watch the luggage being stowed aboard, and the passengers picking their compartments. Then he had a good look at the engine. It occurred to him incidently that it was rather a pity that so fine a piece of mechanism should be about to start on its final journey. He took possession of a corner seat in the third class smoking compartment next the guard's van and the engine, and sat there for a minute or two. But a glance at his watch told him that there was still five minutes to wait before the start, and it struck him that he might just as well have another look along the train which was to carry him to destruction.

"It's beastly rough on all these people," he mused, as he sauntered along. "but it can't be helped. It is only a matter of average after all. Wonderful thing the law of average. This particular smash will only bring the number up to what it ought to be on this particular line for the year."

He caught sight of a sour faced old dowager in a first-class compartment, and stood for a moment staring at her—a compliment she returned with a haughty scowl. He moved on with a grim smile.

"Somebody won't be sorry she was in the smash anyhow," he muttered.

The train was not very crowded, which was just as well as things stood, was the last mental note he made as he turned his steps back to the front of the train. A few seconds later it glided gently out of the terminus with its complement of passengers, who were all unconscious that it was gathering speed for a fatal journey.

The one man who did know sat alone in his smoking compartment, a freshly lighted cigar between his lips—his last. He was still completely possessed with the ghastly humour of the situation. He even laughed quietly as he thought of the dowager who had scowled at him, and he recalled with some degree of amusement the cordial nod of a money lender, whose offices in Jermyn Street had had many a visit from him.

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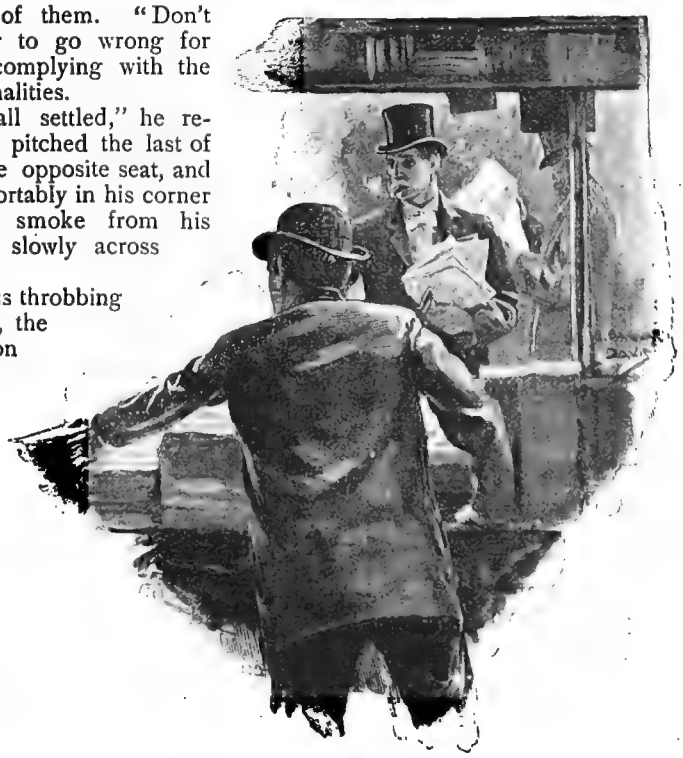
"Strikes me that old sixty-per-cent Isaacs would not have been half so cheerful if he knew of the nice little smash Hoadley and I have arranged for this precious train," he remarked aloud. "There is one consolation—he will get nothing out of my demise even if he escapes being smashed up with the rest of us. Hoadley's paper and my own ceased to be a negotiable security with the miserable old miser long ago."

He yawned as he turned his attention to the periodicals which combined literature and assurance.

"May as well see the conditions," he reflected as he turned over the page of one of them. "Don't want anything to go wrong for the want of complying with the necessary formalities.

"That is all settled," he remarked, as he pitched the last of them on to the opposite seat, and lay back comfortably in his corner watching the smoke from his cigar drifting slowly across the carriage.

The ceaseless throbbing of the engine, the dim suggestion of rhythm in the rattle of the carriage windows and the dull rumble of the wheels on the metals, stole soothingly on his senses, till presently he dropped into the oblivion of slumber while the doomed express roared and panted through the silence of the night. On and on she went, the minutes and the miles between the sleeper and his destination dwindling unheeded.



He purchased the whole series of them.

Suddenly there was a piercing shriek from the engine whistle. The brake came down with a grinding hiss and checked the headlong speed of the train with such abruptness that Brinkworth was pitched violently forward, and came back to wakefulness with a start. For a moment he failed to realise where he was or whither he was bound. Then his eyes fell on the periodicals on the seat in front of him. The sight of his shaky signatures brought everything back with a rush.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated, "how long have I been asleep?"

He snatched out his watch. A quarter past ten the hands pointed. There was little more than fifteen minutes between him and eternity.

He shivered, for he was cold and stiff from his sleep. The effect of the champagne he had consumed at dinner was passing and his nerves were unstrung. He clenched his teeth and tried vainly to steady the trembling hand in which he held his watch.

"What a pity I woke," he muttered, "Heavens! How the minutes drag."

The brakes were off and the express was fast picking up speed again. Brinkworth thrust his watch back into his pocket, and let down the carriage window. The next moment the lights of a deserted country railway station flashed by. The express was through in a moment — but not too swiftly to prevent Brinkworth from recognising it.

"Pilston!" he gasped, "eight miles to the end."

He sprang up and paced the compartment unsteadily for a few moments.

Then he tried to read, but his brain failed to grasp the meaning of the print that his eyes read. He tried to re-light his cigar, but his chattering teeth and shaking hands made that a failure also. He dropped the

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cigar with a groan, and pulled out his watch again.

"Seven minutes—shall we never get there?"

He sat with his gaze glued to the dial, watching the second hand creeping jerkily round its little circle. Once, twice, it completed its round, and then he could look no longer. He thrust the watch back into his pocket, and sat clenching and unclenching his hands and biting at his nails by turns, while the perspiration began to ooze out in great beads on his forehead.

His eyes wandered stealthily to the opposite side of the carriage where the nob of the communicator and its little table of directions for stopping the train was placed.

"No! No!" he groaned through his chattering teeth, "I daren't—I must go through with it now." But he found himself creeping from his seat in its direction. The next moment his fingers were on it.

"No!" he almost shrieked, and flung himself back on the seat.

For a few seconds he kept himself there, and strove to keep his eyes off that tempting little wooden nob, one touch at which meant rescue from sudden and violent death. Would it be sudden? It might be horribly lingering. The thought made him shudder, and he wrenched out his watch once more. There were still four minutes to the end. It seemed hours ago that there only remained five minutes.

Again his eyes wandered to the opposite side of the compartment, while he crouched up in the corner clutching the cushions desperately as if to hold himself there by main force till the crash came.

"I'm a coward"—he moaned—"a mean despicable coward—I—" his voice broke—"I can't!—I can't!" he sobbed, and the next moment he was pulling and pushing at the communicator like a maniac.

Almost instantly there was the screech and crunch of the brakes as they came down on the wheels, and checked the headlong rush of the express with a suddenness that flung the passengers out of their seats. As it slowed rapidly down, it flashed into Brinkworth's mind that he must give a reason for stopping the express. A mile or less ahead lay the sleeper that was to wreck it. He dared not show a guilty knowledge of its existence.

When the guard clambered on to the footboard and opened the carriage door, inspiration came to Brinkworth. Before the man in uniform could open his lips to speak, he made a rush at him, dealt him a blow which sent him backwards, and then sprang out of the carriage and closed with him.

For the next five minutes the alarmed passengers hanging out of the windows of the train to see what was the cause of the sudden stop, were witnesses of a most interesting fight between the guard and Brinkworth, which ended in that heavily insured individual's total and ignominious defeat, and he was presently walked off up the line in the custody of a railway detective who happened to be travelling by the train, and a couple of signalmen who opportunely arrived on the scene as they came off duty, while the express resumed its interrupted journey.

Brinkworth never forgot that walk or the practical demonstration his custodians gave him of their sympathy with the battered guard of the express.

A couple of miles across country they dragged and pushed him, and after the usual formalities were gone through at the police station, he was escorted across a dark, cheerless yard and flung, as being a violent and desperate character and possibly a maniac, with considerable violence into a dark and stone-floored cell.

He did not trouble to get up off the cold stones. He was very tired and very sore. His clothes were in tatters, and he knew for certain that one of his eyes was badly blackened, for it was fast closing up already. He had shrewd suspicion that the other would not be long before it followed suit.

"I'm in a nice mess," he reflected indifferently. "Charged with unlawfully stopping a train, violently assaulting several railway officials, and I fancy the inspector said they might just as well stick down drunk also while they were about it. Don't care—it's a jolly sight better than being dead—a mangled corpse in that confounded express, anyhow. Poor old Hoadley will be cut up about it. He will have to be, that's all."

He was still indulging in this philosophic view of things, when the cell door was flung suddenly open and a second prisoner projected into the interior. The new arrival stumbled over Brinkworth's prostrate body, and fell headlong. His remarks as he picked himself up were both forcible and profane.

Brinkworth could not see his companion in misfortune—but the voice was a revelation.

"Hoadley!" he exclaimed, in amazement, "You here!"

"Yes," replied that individual gloomily, "They caught me putting the log on the line."

"What a fool I was!" cried Brinkworth.

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How Mr. Gilby represents by gesture—
1. Faith. 2. Hope. 3. Charity.

THE SILENT SPEAKER

How the Rev. F. W. G. Gilby preaches to the Deaf and Dumb.

By Stanley White.

There is a gaunt-looking block of buildings fronting into Oxford Street not a quarter of a mile from the Marble Arch. I do not suppose that one out of every ten pedestrians hurrying by guesses what goes on there. That red brick church is the cathedral of London's two thousand deaf and dumb; and the adjoining house down the side street is the abode of the resident clergyman, the Rev. F. W. G. Gilby, himself the son of deaf and dumb parents, though able to hear and speak like the best of us.

Having heard much of the wonderful work Mr. Gilby is doing among this grievously afflicted section of the community, I determined to make one at a week-night service. This, as usual, took place on a Thursday night at the somewhat late hour of eight o'clock. When I arrived the congregation had already assembled, and such slaves of habit are we that I actually tip-toed my way to the nearest seat, forgetful for the moment that my fellow-worshippers could not be disturbed by the tramp of a regiment of soldiers. Mr. Gilby, who was not on duty and who knew my mission, took a seat beside me, just to throw a little light on the proceedings, which are bewildering to strangers.

The congregation consisted of about a score, poorly dressed, for the most part. There was about the same number of men and women, and all sat very quiet as the officiating clergyman entered. Attired in the conventional surplice he took his stand at the reading-desk, and immediately made a few signs, incomprehensible to me, but which instantly set the rest of the congregation rustling the leaves of their hymn-books. The place found, all stood up and the hymn commenced.

But for the faint murmur of the outer world no sound accompanied the rendering of that hymn, which so far as outward seeming went was a solo on the fingers of the minister. Yet who can say that no strains of inborn

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"What a disappointment!"

Very scornful.

Heathen rage.

harmony were inspired by the beautiful words in the minds of those silent singers?

During most of the service the congregation were seated.

Though the familiar Liturgy was used it was in vain that I tried to keep in touch with the minister; we parted company with the first few passes of those agile fingers.

With the light shining upon his upturned face throwing into relief the strong and expressive features; his body turned slightly sideways, the chaplain rapidly spelled out the prayers. The congregation sat as though carved in marble. Unlike hearing worshippers they could not allow their eyes to wander from the one active figure for a moment, under pain of losing a sentence. The psalms being reached the cold spelling of words gave way to the language of dramatic gesture, and the feeling of depression engendered by the unaccustomed silence somewhat lightened. My untrained sense failed to follow the reading, but I noticed that the meaning was duly appreciated by my fellow-worshippers.

But now the silence once more made itself felt, and the dim church, only partially lighted for these week night services, seemed half in shadow. Then came the sermon. From what Mr. Gilby told me, I gathered it was a simple Gospel discourse, with a practical application to daily life. They do not go in for abstruse doctrinal controversy at St. Saviour's. Such would not be understood. The chief thing aimed at is simplicity. Deaf and dumb folk are cut off from so much that every day metaphors and allusions readily understandable by young children have no meaning whatever for them.

The service over, both ministers were quickly besieged by their flock, and waves of conversation filled the vestibule. It may seem paradoxical, but the deaf and dumb are an especially gossipy folk. Is it any wonder that they make the best use of their few social opportunities?

What the deaf and dumb who live in London would do without St. Saviour's and the man who is one with them in sympathy, but superior in his power to help, I do not know. He is the pivot around whom they gravitate. One poor man worn with age and toil invoked his aid in filling up a census form. Most are very poor, nor is this surprising when one considers how great their handicap in life's race.

The system of gesture-talking, of which Mr. Gilby is one of the world's finest adepts, repays study. Great as is the contrast between the monotonous drone of a mechanical reader, and the fiery declamation of an inspired orator, it is not sharper than the difference between the cold spelling out of words in the deaf and dumb alphabet, and the far more comprehensive and telling gesture language.

It is a mistake that this last appeals only to the highly educated of deaf-mutes. Quite the reverse is the case. Gestures are

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probably the most primitive mode of expression, and are the sole means by which the very ignorant of this unfortunate class can be made to understand. Deaf-mutes unable to read or write or even talk on the fingers, and consequently unable to think in words, but only in pictures, are known to wander about the country, and earn a living by hawking. Their only means of communication is by gestures.

A deaf and dumb gentleman once found his affliction an actual advantage. He was a merchant trading with the natives of Africa. For once he was in a superior position to his rivals, thanks to the universality of the gesture language. He understood the natives and they him, and he therefore quickly disposed of his wares. This incident clearly shows that the gestures in common use all over the world must have a natural *raison d'être*. Very few are arbitrary.

Examine Mr. Gilby's ideas of Faith, Hope, and Charity. In the first, solemn asseveration and trust are conceived in the upturned face. In "Hope" the hand extended, first open and then closed, shows first, expectancy, and then possession. The facial expression clearly means that the boon hoped for is spiritual, and not temporal. The yearning look on the face, coupled with the crossed hands over the breast, at once gives the impression of love for a fellow creature, the true meaning of "Charity."

The utmost aversion.

The death of Hope, or Disappointment, has a forcible and amusing sign, when the matter in question is not serious. The gesticulating right hand gives emphasis to the occurrence while the fingers at the throat show that hope has been choked. "Contempt" requires no comment. It makes Mr. Gilby look a very unpleasant person indeed. Some people tear their hair when in a passion, Mr. Gilby tears his coat. Let us hope he has not often occasion to make use of this dreadful symbol.

No one who knows Mr. Gilby would imagine him capable of enmity or extreme aversion, yet he makes a very fine show of that baneful quality. There are unfortunately few of us who require explaining the meaning of those empty pockets, by which Mr. Gilby expressed, simply and eloquently, the all too common complaint of poverty. "Fear" is shown by a very dramatic, shrinking attitude.

Let us now turn to the following sentence from a sermon, herewith illustrated by a series of photographs specially taken for this article.

"Dear friends, may God comfort and sustain you now, and guide you to more perfect life."

In every case the expression of the face is adapted to the gesture, and the idea to be conveyed. "Dear friends" — is shaking hands with oneself; "May God" — here the face is turned appealingly upwards, while the blessing is invoked by the raised right hand, the left being passed caressingly over the heart. The sign for "comfort" is beautifully suggestive. The hands have a soothing motion, as they travel down to a point of rest. It is a gesture used by hypnotists to lull their patients into unconsciousness. The motion from right to left of the index finger serves as

Hard up.

Shrinking from impending danger.

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Dear Friends—

make it understand anything. As has been well said, these poor people seem to be separated by a great gulf from the rest of humanity.

To bridge this gulf two main systems are employed. The most advanced is the oral by which the dumb are literally made to speak, and to understand a speaker by watching his lips.

The effort of a dumb man speaking is most curious, and until one gets used to it a little painful. Unable to hear a word he is saying, articulation is, of course, purely mechanical. The pitch of the voice is always exactly the same. The words come out in jerks with a pause between each. A fine-looking intelligent young fellow introduced to me by Mr. Gilby astonished me by a casual remark about the weather; and went on to speculate on the chances of the rival crews in the then coming boat-race.

—may God—

—comfort—

—and—

—sustain—

—you now—

the conjunction "and."

The clenched hand raised by the open palm is a perfect symbol of the idea to "sustain." "You now" is rather obscure. The index finger is pointing to the person addressed; while the open hands denote waiting on the instant. "Guide" is expressed by one hand leading the other. "To" is indicated by the directing forefinger; "more" by placing the hands together, and then expanding them.

The idea of a vessel full to the brim is the silent metaphor used for "perfect"; "life" is expressed by the passing the fingers over the region of the vital organs. All these signs, which take so long to explain are made with great rapidity. So perfect is the link of understanding between the preacher and his flock, that a gesture sermon takes no more time to deliver than one of a similar length when spoken.

Contrary to the general impression, the education of the deaf and dumb is a far more difficult and tedious matter than in the case of the blind. The mind of a deaf-mute child is a perfect blank; it is most difficult to

Were it not so difficult to attain proficiency in this system it would be splendid. It is certainly the ideal one.

In the first place it is taught by the touch. The child places its hand on the teacher's throat and gauges articulation by the character of the vibrations. The sign and gesture language has not as yet been displaced to any great extent. It is generally considered to be most reliable.

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An incident, showing what a terrible barrier deafness is to mental growth, occurred some time ago and is of considerable interest.

Two gentlemen sitting in a room one evening agreed to make the following experiment. One stopped up his ears, and the other bandaged his eyes. They sat thus until a quarter of an hour had elapsed and then compared impressions.

The "deaf" man said he had had a most weary and monotonous fifteen minutes. His mind refused to work; there seemed nothing to stimulate it. On the other hand, the "blind" gentleman's brain had been active. He heard the postman's knock, and this set his mind travelling hundreds of miles thinking of absent friends. In short, he continually heard sounds that kept his brain at work by the force of association of ideas.

This anecdote serves to show how cut off are the deaf mentally if left to themselves.

It is through the self-sacrificing labours of such men and women as Mr. Gilby and his wife that so many deaf mutes are bright and useful members of the community. There are other branches of the Deaf and Dumb Association in London. And I know personally of one deaf mute who is in holy orders working among his afflicted brothers and sisters. He is a most cultured, refined, and affable gentleman.

—and—

—guide you—

—to—

—more—

—perfect—

—life.

Under a recent law the School Boards are now charged to undertake the education of the deaf and dumb, and this is, of course, a great development. But it is when schooldays are over, and the battle of life has to be faced under a grievous handicap, that the work of the association becomes of paramount value.

It is to the association that the young deaf and dumb youth or maiden first turns for help in getting the needed start in business or trade,

By this means lads are placed out to learn tailoring, shoemaking, saddlery, French polishing, lithography, or printing.

In all these handicrafts they are able to hold their own with hearing and speaking competitors. And so with the girls; they quickly become proficient at all branches of manual work.

If trade implements are wanted, the society steps in and helps where the young mechanic is unable to obtain them for himself. In short, everything that can be done to place these afflicted ones on a fair footing in life is done by this association.

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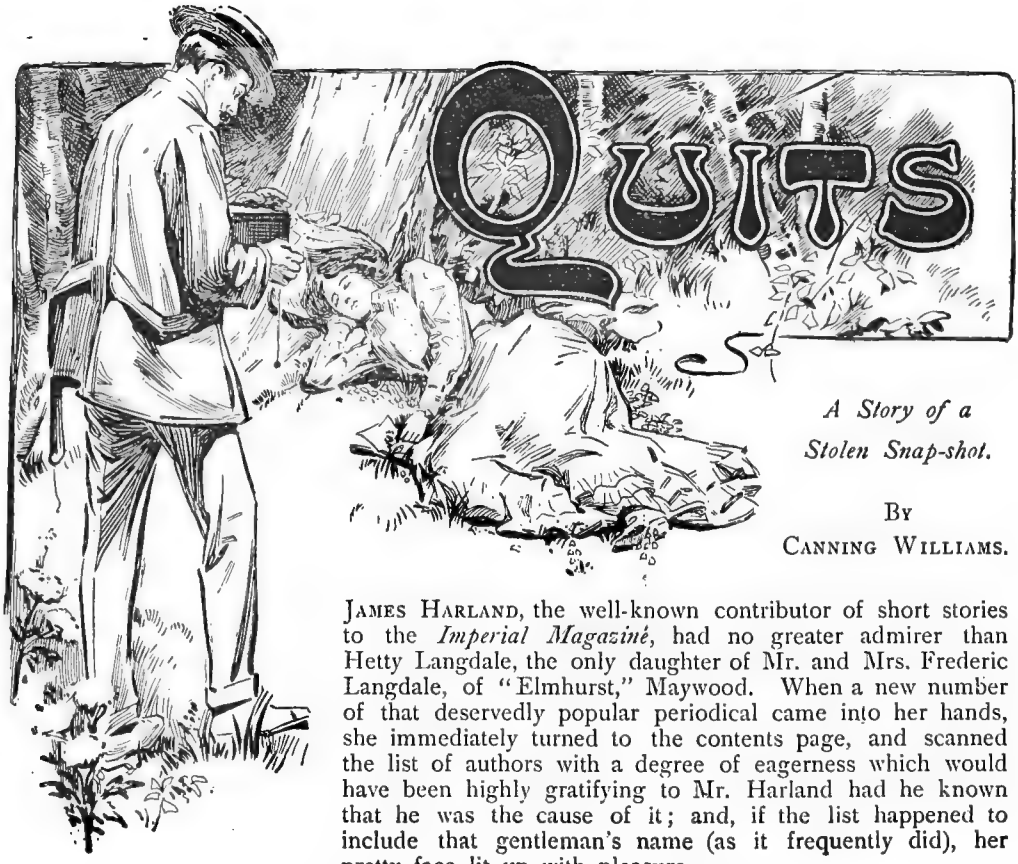

A Story of a Stolen Snap-shot.

By Canning Williams.

James Harland, the well-known contributor of short stories to the *Imperial Magazine*, had no greater admirer than Hetty Langdale, the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Langdale, of "Elmhurst," Maywood. When a new number of that deservedly popular periodical came into her hands, she immediately turned to the contents page, and scanned the list of authors with a degree of eagerness which would have been highly gratifying to Mr. Harland had he known that he was the cause of it; and, if the list happened to include that gentleman's name (as it frequently did), her pretty face lit up with pleasure.

She was delighted, therefore, when she saw her favourite's name in a recent number of the *Imperial* as the author of "A Fair Slumberer," the illustrations being by the celebrated Frank Dalby and from a photograph. Following her usual habit she first glanced at the pictures; they gave her an idea of the drift of the story, and helped her imagination of the scenes. Suddenly her pleasant expression gave place to one of frowning intentness; a transformation due apparently to the photograph of the principal character in the tale. She examined the trimming of the hat, the pattern of the blouse, the buckle of the belt. There could be no doubt about it; the girl lying asleep in the lane was none other than Hetty herself!

"What impudence!" she exclaimed, almost stunned with surprise.

She re-examined the offending illustration only to be more firmly convinced that it was indeed she who was reclining in blissful unconsciousness on the flower-decked bank.

Seeking her mother she handed the open magazine to her.

"Do you know that girl?" she asked, pointing to the photograph.

Mrs. Langdale elegantly placed her *pince-nez* upon her well-shaped nose.

"She bears a most remarkable resemblance to yourself, Hetty," she replied.

"The hat?" said Hetty.

Mrs. Langdale minutely studied that piece of millinery.

"It's the hat you wore last summer!" she cried emphatically.

"The blouse?"

The *pince-nez* again.

"You bought the material at Crawford's! I remember the pattern distinctly!"

"Then I shall do it," said Hetty resolutely.

"Do what, my dear?"

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"I shall write to the editor for Harland's address, and demand an apology. Holding me up to public ridicule!"

"But did you not know that the photograph was taken? Did you not pose for it?"

"Pose! My dear mother, I know nothing about it! I expect that man Harland must have been prowling around here last summer, found me asleep on the bank, and had the impudence to photograph me!"

And, leaving her mother to recover from the shock as best she could, Hetty went to her desk, and, in a stylish, dashing hand, wrote to the editor:—

Miss Langdale presents her compliments to the Editor of the *Imperial Magazine*, and requests him to oblige her with the address of Mr. James Harland, the author of the story in this month's number entitled "A Fair Slumberer."

Two days later, while at breakfast, Hetty received her reply:—

In answer to your inquiry, the address of Mr. Harold Nicholson ("James Harland") is "Ravensthorpe," Maywood.

She handed the letter to her mother, looking daggers.

"Well!" exclaimed the elder lady. "Mr. Nicholson of all men. How fortunate your father is away, or there would have been a scene! He'd have horsewhipped him!"

"Leave him to me," said Hetty, rising, a strange look in her eyes; "I will settle with him!"

Now the fact must here be stated that Hetty had treated this Mr. Nicholson in a rather inconsiderate way. She had shown pleasure in his society; had led him, unconsciously perhaps, in the spring of the previous year to the point of proposing marriage to her, and then had cooled him off, so that they were merely on a bowing acquaintance.

Harold took his rebuff in a manly fashion, and Hetty was not a little surprised that the man who had given every manifestation of the sincerest love should have been so easily silenced. At the time she refused him she had not the remotest idea that he wrote for the magazines, least of all that he was the incomparable Harland, and she could not help feeling a certain admiration for his modesty, despite her anger, as she made her way to "Ravensthorpe." But she determined that this should make no difference in her treatment of the culprit.

"Good morning, Miss Langdale," said Harold on entering the drawing-room into which Hetty had been shown, extending his hand.

"Good morning, Mr. James Harland," she replied, with sarcastic emphasis on the name, holding the handle of her sunshade with both hands. "I was not aware till this morning that we had an author for a neighbour."

"Neither my pen-name nor the discovery appears to please you," said he, slowly lowering his hand. "Has your opinion of James Harland changed since you favoured me with your confidences?"

"It has—completely."

"You no longer think his stories worth reading?"

"I shall never read another line of yours—never! I consider the trick you played upon me was a most dastardly one."

"The trick, Miss Langdale," said he, with annoying calmness; "to what do you refer?"

"She bears a most remarkable resemblance to yourself, Hetty."

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"I refer to the photograph in the *Imperial Magazine*. Up to this morning I considered you a gentleman; now I hold a different estimate of you. No gentleman would act as you have done. And to get it published in a magazine for all the world to see!"

"But I had no idea, Miss Langdale, that the *Imperial* people would reproduce the photograph. No one could have been more surprised than I was to see it in the paper."

"Then why did you send it?" she demanded.

"Merely to help the artist to realise the scene," he explained.

"But what right had you to take my photograph when I was—was resting?"

"You were asleep, Miss Langdale; fast asleep," he observed, with imperturbable good humour.

"You have not answered my question, Mr. Nicholson. Why did you photograph me in such a position?"

"I could not help myself. You must blame my artistic eye. You used to say I had one. Do you not remember?"

"That is a reason I cannot accept," persisted the implacable girl.

"It is the only one I can offer, Miss Langdale."

"I consider your conduct reprehensible, and I have come to demand an apology. No honourable man would photograph a lady who was—who was in such a posture. I had no notion that anyone was near, and the sun had fatigued me. And then for you, Mr. Nicholson, of all men, to be so lost to all sense of propriety as to steal up to me——"

"Excuse me, Miss Langdale," observed Harold, "but I must object to your using the word 'steal.' It conveys the idea that I crept up to you, like a man stalking a rabbit, whereas I came upon you quite suddenly, nor did I moderate my footsteps in the least."

"For you to photograph me," continued the exasperated Hetty, "and then to have the impudence to send it to a magazine for publication—to hold me up to public scorn! I consider it was a mean and dastardly trick."

"But have I not told you, my dear Miss Langdale, that I had not the least suspicion that they would publish the photograph?" said Harold.

"Did you tell them not to do so?"

"No, I did not. I imagined that they would understand my reason for sending it. It was some days after I had taken the photograph——"

"Stolen the photograph, you mean," she corrected.

"Stolen the photograph," he went on, "that I wrote 'The Fair Slumberer.' I had no thought at the time of working up the incident."

"Working up the incident! So that is how you speak of it," she said, tossing her head.

"I beg pardon, Miss Langdale. It's a journalistic phrase. I should have said that I had no thought at the time I took—stole—the photograph of writing the story."

"In any case it was a dastardly trick," she repeated.

"But cannot you make allowance for the artistic eye? How could I possibly have passed such a picture without possessing myself of it?"

"An artist should be first a gentleman, Mr. Nicholson," observed Hetty, in no mood for compliments.

"A man has not always his moral armour on," he answered. "It was done on the irresistible impulse of the moment."

"But your sending it to the *Imperial Magazine* was not done on the impulse of the moment," she persisted.

"I admit that," he replied, twirling his moustache, "but then as I have twice told you, I did not anticipate that the photograph would be reproduced. You must blame the editor for that. He certainly did it without permission."

"Mr. Nicholson, I came here not to bandy words with you, but to demand an apology. After our past friendship—"

"It was you who broke it off, Miss Langdale."

"Will you permit me to speak, Mr. Nicholson?" she cried, stamping her foot, his words and smiles enraging her.

"I'm all attention, madam," he remarked, straightening his back.

"After all you have said to me, I could not have thought you capable of such an act."

"I must beg of you to accept my explanation, Miss Langdale. Imagine the situation. I happen to be on a photographic expedition. I find a pretty girl sleeping on a bank. Do not frown, Miss Langdale; I assure you you made a lovely picture in your frame of violets and blue-bells. I stand for a moment lost in admiration. Then, acting on an irresistible impulse, I bring my hand camera to bear upon you; I touch the spring, take a final glance, and proceed upon my walk, leaving you in undisturbed possession of your dreams.

"Surely there was nothing dastardly in this! If you had been an ordinary girl—one of the Miss Johnsons, for instance—I should not

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have been arrested for a moment; but as it was—well, I have already told you, I could not help myself. Two or three days afterwards I wrote 'The Fair Slumberer,' and, when sending the manuscript, inclosed your photograph. It was done, as I have said, merely to assist the artist in his drawing. I knew he could not conceive anything equal to the original, so—ha! you melt, Miss Langale, you melt! I see it in your eyes!" cried Harold, with evident relief, noticing a softer look in the girl's face.

"I do not 'melt,' as you express it," said she, annoyed at having betrayed herself, "and as you do not seem disposed to make me an apology, I must ask you, Mr. Nicholson, to consider me from to-day a perfect stranger."

She moved to the door; Harold opened it and bowed, and they parted in silence.

"What a handsome girl she is!" thought Harold, as from behind the drawing-room curtains he watched her disappear. "Never looked handsomer! I was hoping that she would not see this month's *Imperial*. And now she knows who James Harland is! How often she has praised his stories to me! . . . . It can't last; I'm sure it can't last! When she's calmer she will see things in their true light, and then—then there may be an interesting *dénouement!*"

And at the prospect of this he suddenly became calm himself.

Now it has been well said that the man or woman who, upon reflection, sees that he or she has been unjust to another, and does not make early reparation, has sunk to a very low moral level indeed.

Hetty was not of this category. She had been allowed far too much of her own way. She was an only child, favoured in form and features, and accustomed to the homage of young and old; but she was not heartless or unjust. Her treatment of Harold in the previous year was not deliberately cruel. A pretty, vivacious girl of nineteen is scarcely aware of her power and subtle, unconscious charm, and it was not until Harold gave expression to his feelings for her that she saw that she had shown him a too marked preference.

Hetty was therefore far from happy when she reached home, nor did she relish her mother's inquisitive questions. She began to think that she had been too severe; that her indignation, especially towards the close of the interview, was a trifle simulated.

She recalled Mr. Nicholson's behaviour towards her during the three years of their acquaintance, and could find no single instance of want of gentlemanliness. These thoughts haunted her in the stillness of the night with uncomfortable persistence. After all, the story (she had read it several times since the morning) was a pretty one. She fancied she saw in the description of Eunice, the "Fair Slumberer," a not unsuccessful

"Mr. Nicholson, I came here not to bandy words with you, but to demand an apology."

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attempt to paint herself; and it was not Mr. Nicholson's fault that the photograph had been published.

And how very modest it was of Harold not to tell her that he was James Harland when she praised his stories! He was clever — very clever. He would become famous in the literary world, and she had said that he was no gentleman; that he was not honourable! Had declared that she would not read another line of his, and yet had thrice perused his story since saying so! How inconsistent! How ridiculous!

Breakfast-time found her with no appetite, and a pale face. Her share in the table-talk was forced; her remarks at times incongruous. There was only one remedy for this; she must call upon Harold and accept his explanation. Neighbours should be friends.

An hour later the penitent Hetty found herself in the drawing-room at "Ravensthorpe," listening with no little trepidation for the sound of Harold's footsteps. Presently she heard them, and her heart doubled its beating. She rose when he entered the room, blushing deeply.

"I have called, Mr. Nicholson," she said, offering him her hand in a prettily timid way, "to crave your pardon for my language yesterday. I exaggerated your offence. I see now that you had no wish to—well, I mean that after what happened a year ago—I thought perhaps that you were——"

"Trying to be 'quits,' as the boys say?" said Harold, his eyes a-glow.

"Yes—trying to be 'quits,'" she repeated thankful for his help. "Do you pardon me, Mr. Nicholson?"

"Do not use the word," he replied. "Let us forget all about it. And now, Miss Langdale, what do you think of my story? But perhaps you have not read it?"

"I have read it three times, and I consider it the cleverest story you have written," she answered with enthusiasm.

"And Eunice? What is your opinion of Eunice?"

"I will not give you my opinion of her," she said, dropping her eyes.

"And so you do not think now that it was an unpardonable crime to steal that photograph?" he asked tenderly, coming very near to her.

"Under the circumstances—no," she replied quietly.

He came yet nearer.

"It is not always a sin to steal, is it, Hetty?" he said caressingly.

"Not always, Harold," she answered, understanding him.

"It would be the sweetest of apologies," he murmured, bending over her. "May I? Under the circumstances?"

"As an apology?" she whispered, raising her eyes.

"Yes, as an apology—a sweet apology."

She seemed reluctant, and yet her eyes were tender.

"As an apology, and—a promise," he ventured.

Then the lips were raised.

Then last there come the twins,
As like as two new pins,
And mother is so fond of them, it's laughable to see.
But Jack and Jane and I
Often tease them on the sly,
But I'm "awful" fond of twins, and twins is
["awful" fond of me.

The baby is a lump of flesh
Dressed out in frills and lace,
And is the loveliest thing on earth,
However plain its face.

From "Domestic Ditties," a charming book of songs for children, by Alfred Scott-Gatty.—Now on sale.

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On and Off the Wheel

Sundry hints for the special benefit of ladies on the graceful management of their bicycles.

By Livingstone Black.

1 and 2. To start well, sit squarely in the saddle, and the machine will at once take an even course. 3. With the left pedal down, a graceful dismount is made by bringing over the right foot.

When the peaceful pasture lands of rural England were first disturbed by the string of hideous, roofless waggons which made up the first railway train, the cattle fled in terror. Nowadays they chew the cud with undisturbed complacency as the flying monster rushes past in a whirling cloud of dust and steam.

So it was and is with the lady cyclist, figuratively speaking, of course. If the spectators did not actually fly in terror at the approach of the first woman on wheels, many turned up their eyes in pious horror. "How unwomanly!" they croaked; "how ungraceful!"

In the infancy of ladies' cycling the art of dressing for the wheel was not studied, and this may account for the censure heaped upon the pioneers. But nowadays skirts are made which are a comfort to the wearer and a delight to the beholder.

It is, of course, in the management of the skirt that the chief art of the lady cyclist lies, at least so far as a graceful appearance goes.

In this connection a good start is everything. In other words, if you want to look well, mount well. In mounting, as in most things, there is a wrong and a right way. The main point is to take a perfectly even seat, so that a true balance is attained and a straight course taken directly the machine is set in motion.

It is said that everyone attempts to get on a horse's back, for the first time, from the wrong side, and with equal truth it may be averred that the majority of the untaught do as badly in mounting a bicycle. Is it possible to imagine a worse send off than must inevitably follow the neglect to take a good seat in the saddle while putting pressure on the pedal? Several results may follow, none of them pleasant.

In any case it means that the machine starts before you are ready, and you must scramble into the saddle somehow, with skirt all awry, or you will be left behind, and there is no small danger of your falling over to the other side.

And even if one has the undeserved good fortune to avoid a spill, it is not pretty to see a girl taking a zig-zag course of thirty or forty yards, it being an open question all the while whether she is going to stay on or fall off. What a miserable, nervous feeling for the spectators as well as for the girl herself!

To be able to mount and dismount properly are the most difficult points of cycling to the new beginner. I was talking to a young lady the other day, and she described her

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sensations of the first few rides. They were more than disagreeable. She had been taking lessons, and could ride perfectly well; but no sooner did she sally forth alone than an awful feeling came over her that she would never be able to get off. What should she do when she reached the shop she was making for?

She was on the outskirts of a small town and she could see one or two builders' carts looming on the horizon. She held them in mortal dread, and reasoned thus: "If I dare not meet those carts, what shall I do when I get into town? Get off I must." And she did. Without more ado she clapped on the brake and steered serenely into the hedge, paralysing with astonishment the carmen at her incomprehensible behaviour. One or two slight scratches was the price she willingly paid for the boon of feeling *terra firma* once more beneath her feet.

But then came shame. What would her friends say? How they would laugh if she returned without her purchases wheeling her machine all the way home. So she mounted again, arriving at the shop without accident, though how she managed to dismount she never knew. Just within sight of home the same old feeling came over her once more, and so she rode for some hundred yards beyond her house, and might have ridden very much further had she not met a friend.

This girl is in a wrong position. The machine will start before she has time to take a good seat. She is already putting pressure on the pedal.

Of course, her skirt will hang all wrong——

——And she will be lucky if she avoids falling off the other side.

How necessary it is, therefore, that there should be no lack of education in the art of dismounting. In riding through crowded streets life mainly depends upon the ability of the rider to dismount cleverly at a moment's notice. Some girls, through sheer nervousness, coupled with ignorance, attempt the impossible by jumping off with both feet, while others make an awkward and hazardous descent with the left pedal raised. It would tax the powers of the cleverest trick-cyclist to get off in such a manner.

And the right way is so simple and graceful. Only just wait till the left pedal is down, bring over the right foot and calmly step off—and there you are.

Learn to mount and dismount, and you are more than half a good cyclist, that is, of course, so far as straightforward riding is concerned. Nowadays girls do not stop there.

Ten years ago if anyone had prophesied the complete mastery of the machine at present attained by women he would have been laughed out of court.

Big distance rides are by no means confined to men. There is Mrs. Lindsay, who, not content

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To dismount thus is to court disaster. The left pedal is raised, compelling her to jump off with both feet.

If the skirt is too long it may catch in the back wheel, the pedal becomes a fixture, and drags the rider down.

with breaking the 1000 mile record for women, rested six hours and then knocked off another 500 miles.

And then look at the wonderful feats they can perform in the way of freak riding. Nowadays a girl thinks nothing of careering at full tilt along a public thoroughfare disdaining to touch the handle bars, although I should certainly not advise any reader to try.

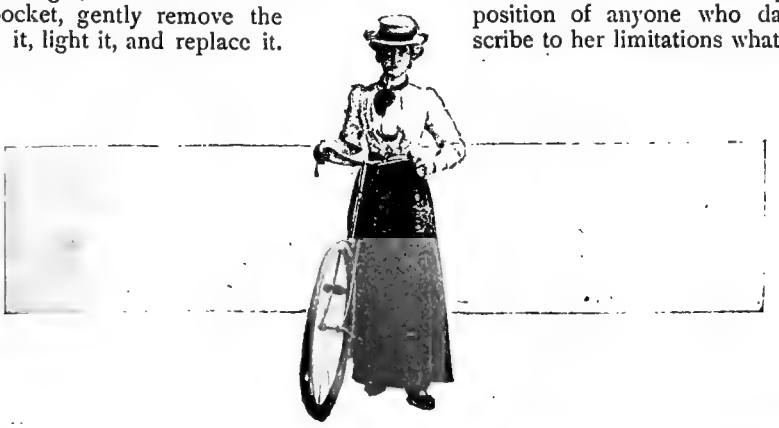
There are some old croakers yet living who maintain that it is impossible to do two things at once. But what is the use of dogmatising on such lines when you can see ladies on the wheel and knitting—actually knitting at the same time—a somewhat unusual performance, but one which has been more than one accomplished.

Most men when they want to light up are content to dismount, and probably most ladies are also. But there are not a few who are capable of bringing their machines to a standstill, and without any support, except what is furnished by the front wheel turned to the proper angle, will draw a match from the pocket, gently remove the lamp, open it, light it, and replace it.

These tricks are not often done in the public thoroughfares, for fear great and enthusiastic crowds might assemble. They are mostly confined to the schools, and so the general public does not know what wheel-women can do. Drinking a cup of tea while in the saddle is another rather delicate performance, which serves to show what a complete mastery some have over the machine; while various sports of the sort indulged in at military tournaments, such as tilting at the ring, tent-pegging, and assault and battery on unoffending heads and posts are further evidences, if any were needed.

But, perhaps, the funniest of cycle feats is to take a ride with a cat in your lap. A cat will never give its confidence without excellent reasons. You may, therefore, be sure that if it is good enough for him it must be quite safe.

Well, enough has been said to prove woman's ability to do anything in or out of reason. Her powers of the bicycle should at least show the absurdity of the position of anyone who dares prescribe to her limitations whatsoever.



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SIR DAN DE LION

SIR DAN DE LION rode forth one day,
With his Hore-hound at his heels,
His mettlesome Colt's-foot pawed the turf,
And he Blue-bells rang glad peals.

AND many a lady fair rode too
Her Sorrel that beautiful day;
There was Pimper-Nel and little Prim-Rose,
And Violet, Whin, and May.

A MAN-DRAKE told them the Mountain-Thyme,
So they ate Bread-and-Cheese on the spot;
And Creeping Jenny came up and cried,
"I pray you, Forget-me-not?"

THEY saw the Bull-rush down to the lake,
And they saw the Cow-slip up;
And they sat on Toad-stools and drank bright mead
From a golden Butter-cup.

THEY heard the Crocus, and donned their Furze
In the bosky Aspho-del;
And they all rode home to their flower-beds,
As the ghostly Night-shade fell,

HENRY EDLIN.

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THE INFATUATION OF CATTERWINK-DANE

By SYDNEY CLIVE.

His appearance was remarkable, and perhaps invited the curious glances cast at him, as he shambled to his chair at the *table d'hôte*. He might have been any age from sixty to eighty; but he blushed as frequently as a girl of seventeen.

"Looks like a scared chicken," was Virginia Warrington's remark, glancing at him as he sat opposite her. "He was frightened once—badly—and he's not got over it yet. Say, Ross, did you ever see anything so comic? This is the first time the poor old gentleman has seen fish-knives."

The subject of the fair American's remarks was in fact examining the neat array of silver implements beside his plate, with something very like dismay in his withered old face. Finally, not without a furtive glance at his neighbour, who, unfortunately, was no fish-eater, he broke off a bit of bread, and with its aid chased the piscatorial morsel on to his fork. He was quite unconscious of the amusement his action caused his lovely *vis-à-vis*, and having once settled in his own mind that a piece of crust was the recognised instrument, and that he was doing the correct thing, he devoted himself to his dinner with great enjoyment.

"He's a character, I'm sure," said Mrs. Warrington to her husband. "Look at his coat. I rather think he's a millionaire; no one less would dare to wear such a garment. It's a brown holland, Ross, and this is a real smart hotel, and everyone else is wearing evening get-up. And his poor old hands, aren't they pathetic? He can't keep them still, and he keeps on blinking as though he were going to cry. I'm taken with him, Ross, and when dinner's over, you must go and find out his name for me."

"Very well, my dear," responded Captain Warrington; "though, if you'll allow me to say so, I think you'll discover that he's a highly uninteresting old person, remarkable only for extreme ugliness."

Virginia was about to reply, when she met the full gaze of the old man; his sad, watery blue eyes went from her to his plate, and then rested again on her fair face, with a pathetic expression, that said as plainly as words: "Why are you laughing at me, what have I done? I know I'm odd, unusual-looking, but don't, oh, don't laugh at me; don't make fun of my poor old face!"

To Virginia's credit be it said, she blushed and felt very guilty under that wistful gaze. For the rest of the meal she avoided looking at the old man, though his timidity when ordering a bottle of *vin ordinaire* of a supercilious waiter, and intimating in very uneasy French that he wanted, "the *most* ordinary," would at any other time have entertained her greatly.

"I don't like that old creature one bit," Virginia confided to her husband, when they were taking their coffee on the terrace; "he's made me feel small and mean. I'm so afraid he guessed I was laughing at him about the fish-knife. As though it were a sin to eat your salmon with a bit of bread!"

"Perhaps it is worse, for it is a solecism," observed Captain Warrington sententiously. "Don't you want to know his name now?"

"Oh yes, I want to get to know him and make up to him for my nastiness. Go and find out his name right away, Ross," commanded Mrs. Warrington, with all a bride's imperiousness, and her husband went off at once to obey her.

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The terrace hung, so it seemed, in mid-air over the moon-lit lake, and some of Switzerland's grandest snow-heights threw their shadows on the expanse of blue water. Virginia rested her round, white arm on the balustrade, and looked dreamily at the beauty of the scene before her.

"A—a most wonderful night—and—I believe—one obtains the finest view of the lake from the terrace of this hotel—" said a rather tremulous voice beside her. "I—I beg your pardon, Madam, I—I hope I am not disturbing you."

Virginia turned her pretty head to behold a stooping figure, lean and lank, a large head, sparsely thatched with grey hair, eyes that wore a pleading, deprecatory expression, and mouth that was half-open, giving a look of indecision to the old face, and at the same time permitting a sight of a very brilliant new set of teeth.

It was her *vis-à-vis* at dinner, and Virginia instantly seized the opportunity to make her peace with him.

"Not at all," she said, graciously sweeping her silken skirts from the chair by her side. "Won't you sit down? This is indeed a lovely view."

But the new-comer hesitated.

"I have," he began nervously, "mixed very little in society, madam, and—and I should be very grateful if you would overlook any—any slips I might make. I believe—it is customary to introduce one's self—is it not—when there is nobody to perform that office? Permit me," he drew a little nearer, "permit me to tell you my name—Catterwink-Dane, at your service."

"And I'll be as frank with you," said Virginia, gaily holding out her hand. "I'm Mrs. Warrington, and—and I'm very glad to know, you Mr.——by the way, I'd like to know is yours a double-barrelled name, or is Cat—Catterwink—the one your god-mothers and god-fathers bestowed on you?"

"Madam, I am usually addressed by the two appellations," said the owner of the odd cognomen. "It—it is I believe a name not unknown in English history, a de Cattvin came over—"

"Oh, I know," cried Virginia in a friendly manner—"with that Conqueror of yours, who must pretty well have denuded his own country, to bring settlers into England. I'm an American, and we pit our 'Mayflower' against your 'William' Oh, here's my husband, let me introduce you. Captain Warrington, Mr.—Mr. Catterwink-Dane."

The latter gentleman rose to his feet and gave a very low bow, of the sort that was supposed to disappear with the minuet and powder. The Captain might have smiled had there not been something sad in the wandering blue eyes, and even the holland coat that sat so oddly on the shrunken figure was invested with a certain pathos.

"You've only arrived to-day, I believe," said Ross amiably; "it's a lovely place, isn't it? My wife and I can't tear ourselves away; we shall be here another fortnight."

"It is indeed beautiful," responded Mr. Catterwink-Dane with timid enthusiasm. "This—this is the first time I've been abroad, and—and the grandeur of Switzerland almost overwhelms me. It had been my dream from boyhood to see Mont Blanc; when I did—you won't"—he looked piteously at Virginia—"you won't laugh at me—but when I did—I was quite overcome—I—I cried."

"I'm sure," cried Virginia hastily, "I made a perfect baby of myself when I saw Chillon. I thought of Bonnivard, you know, and what a shame it was he could not see the lake and all the lovely views. Poor fellow, he *was* treated badly."

"Byron," said Mr. Catterwink-Dane, "has been my chief consolation through life. His poetry, his wonderful imagination, his lofty ideas have lifted me up out of ordinary common-place life. I used to be able to repeat whole cantos of 'Childe Harold.'"

"My dear," said Captain Warrington suddenly, "I think, as you are in such good hands—I'm sure Mr. Dane will look after you—I'll go and smoke a cigar with Melville. He's ill, poor chap, and feels a bit lonely, I daresay."

"Oh, I don't mind," said Virginia; "Mr. Catterwink-Dane will take care of me, won't you?" she added turning to that gentleman with a smile that vied with the moon in brilliancy.

"Only — too — happy," stammered Mr. Catterwink-Dane, "if—if you won't find me very dull, Mrs. Warrington. I—as I told you, I'm not a society man, I never had any time or money to go into it."

Virginia's eyes left the lake and sought her companion's quaint old face. Never breathed a kinder soul than the little American; to see anyone unhappy, or in trouble, was positive pain to her, and she always strove to administer comfort.

For a fractional instant her long white hand, gleaming with many rings, rested on the holland coat sleeve.

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"Tell me," she said in the softest tone of her soft voice, "tell me all about yourself. That is—if you feel like it, and don't think me rude to ask you."

"I'm sixty-four," Mr. Catterwink-Dane was husky, and he cleared his throat before proceeding, "and—this is the first time any human being has expressed the faintest interest in me; it's like Mont Blanc, it's too much for me. Mrs. Warrington, why do you, a beautiful young creature, with love, wealth" —involuntarily he glanced at the jewels with which Virginia was adorned—"and your life before you, take an interest in an old fellow like me? My life has been a dismal, long, dreary high road, no turns, no unexpected corners; I've seen the end of it for years! Only, I will own, that one little stroke of luck happened to me. Yes, I must say that."

"Tell me all about it," said Virginia, and Mr. Catterwink-Dane obeyed.

"I've been a clerk in the City, in a grocery business," he began, speaking with a little more assurance, "since I was a boy of fourteen. A long time, Mrs. Warrington—fifty years. I ought to have had a jubilee, I suppose" —his old eyes blinked and the corners of the loose mouth trembled as though tears were imminent—"but no one cared whether I served five hundred years or fifty! Then a few weeks ago my employers sent for me. I went to them with a joyful heart, for the young clerks had given me to understand that I was to have a rise. They liked chaffing me; I was always considered fair game."

"How abominable!" cried Virginia, with quick sympathy. "Please go on, Mr. Catterwink-Dane" — for he had paused, and was looking out at the lake with an air of deep thought.

He started at the sound of the pretty, soft voice and continued:

"It was not to give me the rise that my employers sent for me, no, it was for something very different. It was to tell me that I had got beyond my work, that they were sorry, as I had served the house for fifty years, but that they had no option. Go I must. Sometimes I had wondered why other men rose and got on, were promoted from one post to another. Boys I had taught the first rules of their business, passed me, over and over again. I remained stationary, the man of over sixty, doing the work of a boy in his teens. I suppose they were all cleverer; yet, hard work tells, they say, and no one worked harder, that I can swear."

His head dropped on his breast and he repeated the last words with a musing, abstracted air, as though he were trying to find a reason for his having lagged so in the race of life. Suddenly he raised his face with a brighter look upon it.

"I am going," he said, drawing a deep breath, "to tell you of the wonderful piece of good luck that happened to me. It is like a book. My employers saw, I suppose, that the idea of leaving, of losing my situation, almost stunned me. I could say nothing. I could only gaze at him in stupid wonder, for he hastened to tell me that the firm intended to pension me. He named a weekly sum that would just suffice to keep body and soul together, and added that he supposed I had saved a good bit of money.

"Permit me to tell you my name—Catterwink-Dane. at your service."

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Out of my meagre salary on which I was supposed to dress and live like a gentleman! I said nothing, only thanked him, and went away, straight to my lodgings in Islington. And there I found a letter awaiting me, a letter that took my breath away. It was from a lawyer saying that a distant cousin of mine had died and left me two hundred pounds. Just think! Two hundred golden sovereigns!"

"Splendid!" cried Virginia. "And what did you do, Mr. Catterwink-Dane? Did you invest it—or put it by for a rainy day, for something to fall back upon, as people are so fond of saying—as though they were unsteady on their feet."

"You would never guess what I did," observed the superannuated clerk with a touch of triumph. "I put the lawyer's letter away, then I went to my books, and taking down Byron, I turned to my favourite 'Childe Harold' and devoured every word he wrote on Switzerland. My brain was in a whirl. The poet's wonderful verses reduced it again to order. When I closed the book, I was calm. My resolution was taken. I was going to spend my entire legacy on a journey to Switzerland and Italy. The day-dreams of my youth should at last be realised."

Virginia gave a little gasp.

"Wasn't that just a little imprudent?" she said hesitatingly. "I believe—one ought to think of one's old age, oughtn't one?"

"Old age!" broke in Mr. Catterwink-Dane impetuously. "I *am* old, madam, I have just enough to keep me from the workhouse, my two hundred pounds invested, would bring me in a paltry six, or at the utmost, eight pounds a year. What use would that be to me? No, I am laying it out, my treasure, in the wisest fashion, where 'moth cannot corrupt, or thieves break through and steal.' This journey will be a bright, glowing streak of light, in a life of uniform cloud."

His voice sank to a whisper; by the light of the moon Virginia could see his dim eyes turned on her with an air of wistful pleading. Not for the world would she have uttered another word expressive of doubt as to the wisdom of his proceedings.

"Thank you very much for telling me this," she said gently. "I hope from the bottom of my heart that you will thoroughly enjoy your holiday. I am sure no one ever deserved it more."

"Thank you," said the old man, with a smile that betrayed relief. "I am glad you do not think me absolutely mad, to spend my money in this manner. Believe me, it is a wise investment. When I am back in my quiet, dreary lodgings, I shall look back on these days with a delight that will carry me through many bitter hours. I shall not only remember the beauty of the scene, I shall never forget the sympathy and kindness, shown to me, an utter stranger, by the most beautiful woman and the sweetest, I ever saw in my life."

With a certain old-world chivalry, that did not ill accord with the holland coat, Catterwink-Dane raised Virginia's hand to his lips, and kissed it. At the sound of approaching footsteps he drew back into the shadow, and when Ross Warrington strolled up to his wife's side, she was alone.

"Found Melville awfully pleased to have a visitor," the Captain observed cheerfully. "But I wouldn't have left you so long alone, only I thought our friend with the feline name was keeping you company."

"He has only just left me," said Virginia. "Shall we go in now, Ross? It's getting chilly."

Virginia's kind little heart was full of projects for her elderly *protégé's* benefit, but the next morning he came to her, as she was sunning herself on the hotel steps.

"I want to ask a favour of you, Mrs. Warrington," he said humbly.

"Ask anything you like," Virginia said sweetly—"you may be sure I'll only be too glad to grant it."

"Then, during the fortnight that you are here, may I talk to you sometimes?" began Mr. Dane hurriedly. "May I now and again join you in your walks? Not often," he continued eagerly, "oh, believe me, I would not intrude upon you and your husband for the world—but—I thought, I felt sure, that you, who are so kind, would not hesitate to afford me another glimpse of your happiness."

"Mr. Catterwink-Dane," said Virginia quickly, "we—my husband and I—shall be awfully glad if you will join us in some excursions. We mean to see as much of this lovely country as we possibly can."

The watery blue eyes shone. "And—and I may come with you?" he cried joyfully. "Mrs. Warrington, you are too good. God bless you for it. You don't know what this means to me, after years of loneliness. To—"

He broke off abruptly.

"I shall never forget your kindness," he said in a quieter tone. "Never."

Virginia protested laughingly that she had done nothing to merit such extravagant

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thanks; but she felt very kindly towards her new friend, as she experienced the comfortable sensation of having performed a virtuous action.

"At my expense," observed the Captain grimly, when during the following days, the ex-clerk was as faithful to them as their shadow. "I don't much care for triangular parties, Virginia, I own."

"Poor old man, I'm so sorry for him," answered tender-hearted Virginia. "He told me his story, Ross. Such a sad one, and I do feel I want to give him a good time."

"I daresay," grumbled the Captain unappeased; "but I don't see why *I* should be bored, to make an old man's holiday; and he's desperately in love with you, Ginny. Mind you don't trifle with his young affections."

"For shame," answered Mrs. Warrington reproachfully. "Don't laugh at him, Ross; he's to be pitied."

"Because he likes *you?*" queried the Captain teasingly. "Here he comes with his usual offering of flowers for you. I'm afraid he'll ruin himself in bouquets."

"Here he comes with his usual offering of flowers for you."

Virginia looked up with a smile as her elderly admirer approached her.

"What lovely roses!" she said, as he silently offered the flowers. "Thank you so much, Mr. Catterwink-Dane. What beauties!"

"Honoured by your acceptance, though unworthy of you," observed Mr. Catterwink-Dane with a low bow, and Warrington turned away his head to conceal a smile.

But to Virginia there was something very touching in the old man's dog-like devotion, and she never lost patience with him, though, it must be owned, he was a little tiresome in his constant attendance on her, and Ross Warrington might have grown restive had not their stay at the hotel been drawing to a close.

One morning the Captain came into their private sitting room, where Virginia was yawning over a novel, with a telegram in his hand, and a look of solemn importance on his handsome face.

"Virginia, my child, what will you do, if I leave you for a few days?" he asked, sitting down beside her. "Here's a wire from my lawyer, begging me to come over to London at once. I can't think what it is, but I must go. The only thing is, I don't like leaving you alone here."

"I shall be perfectly comfortable, Ross, don't you worry about me," said Virginia reassuringly. "You won't be away more than five or six days, will you? And Mr. Catterwink-Dane will look after me, I'm sure. You can leave me with perfect ease."

"I suppose so," answered the Captain, but he looked rather doubtful. "Old Cat'll guard you like a dragon, I know. Only for goodness' sake be careful of cold, child; don't go out when the dew's falling, and mind you don't get your feet wet—"

"I'll be a regular old granny," Virginia hastened to assure him. "Don't worry about me, there's a dear. Where will you stay in town?"

"I don't quite know. I'll send you a wire on my arrival," answered Captain Warrington. "I must drive to the station and catch the midday train. No, my dear, you will not

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come to see me off. It is raining cats and dogs."

"You *are* fussy," Virginia remarked ungratefully, but she submitted to her husband's command, and listened patiently to his farewell exhortations not to venture out in the damp, and to make "old Cat" useful, if she wanted him.

A feeling of loneliness crept over Virginia as she stood on the hotel steps, waving a last goodbye to the carriage that bore Ross rapidly from her sight.

"I wish I could go to sleep till he comes back," she said with a sigh, as she returned to her novel. "I do miss him——dreadfully."

The day dragged; Mr. Catterwink-Dane appeared neither at luncheon nor dinner, and Mrs. Warrington missed him very much, rather to her surprise.

"He needn't have deserted me the very day I'm all alone," she said to herself discontentedly. "I'll have coffee in our sitting-room, I think. That huge drawing-room gives me the shivers on a wet evening, and the people *are* stupid."

When she entered her little salon, lit only by the ruddy glow of the open fire, that looked cheerful, but bestowed all its heat on the chimney, Virginia was surprised to find no less a person than Mr. Catterwink-Dane awaiting her.

"I thought you'd quite deserted me," she said kindly, giving her hand to the old man, who bent over it and kissed it. "It's awfully sweet of you to look me up, for I'm rather lonely. You know Ross left me this morning. He'll be away a few days, he's gone to England on business."

"Indeed," said the ex-clerk, who seemed more than usually nervous. "I've really come to say good-bye, Mrs. Warrington. I'm leaving to-morrow morning, by the first train."

Virginia opened her big eyes wide. "Isn't that very sudden?" she asked. "I thought you were going to stay here a fortnight."

The old man looked at her with an expression she could not fathom.

"Do you want me to stay?" he asked. "Mrs. Warrington, do you care whether I am here—or not?"

"I want you to enjoy yourself, to do just what you like," replied Virginia, evading a direct answer. "If one's time is limited, one can't stay too long in one place, can one?"

"That's not the question," said Catterwink-Dane earnestly, "but—"

He broke off suddenly, and looked at the jewels Virginia was wearing. She considered her priceless emeralds safer on her neck than in the keeping of her maid. In spite of her husband's objections she had insisted on bringing them with her.

"It's an awful risk to wear those things," Mr. Catterwink-Dane said anxiously. "I wonder you're not afraid."

Virginia laughed. "I don't see what's the use of jewels if you leave them at a bank," she said, "and I always keep mine in that shabby old box over there, with my husband's dispatch-boxes. No thief will think of looking there. You see I shall want them all when we go to Paris and Vienna."

"Still it's very dangerous, really," urged Mr. Dane, "and—and you'll excuse me—but—people notice them, and—seem to think it's strange you should wear them in an hotel. Don't be angry with me," he added timidly, as Virginia's eyes sparkled—"they—they say it's not good form."

"I'm afraid I don't mind much what they say," she rejoined coldly. "I shall continue to wear my emeralds, Mr. Dane, whether strangers approve or not."

"Now you're vexed with me," he exclaimed in distress—"with me—who would lay down my life for you. Mrs. Warrington—you must know, what—what I've been unable to hide—what I'm afraid everyone knows and laughs at, that I love you. Yes, old, ugly, odd as I am, I love you, and I've come to say good-bye, for I shall never, never see you again."

As he spoke the old man fell on his knees before Virginia, and catching her gown in his grasp, bowed his face upon the silken folds, and kissed them passionately.

"Let me stay," he murmured. "Oh, I love you! I love you!"

"Mr. Catterwink-Dane," cried Virginia in dismay, "for goodness sake, get up. You—you don't know what you're saying; you're making me very unhappy. Please, please don't stay there. Get up; suppose someone were to come in!"

As she spoke she bent down and touched the grovelling figure lightly. The next instant an arm was round her throat, a hand covered her mouth to prevent her uttering a cry; there was a snapping sound, a gleam of flashing brightness in the firelight, and her emeralds vanished into Mr. Catterwink-Dane's pocket.

"Say one word," hissed that gentleman, "and I'll wring your pretty neck, you little fool. Tell me where your other jewels are,

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I mean to have them. Try to scream, and—" —his fingers tightened suggestively, and Virginia could only gasp and point towards the very shabby leather case on the writing-table.

"Good," said Mr. Catterwink-Dane composedly. "Now, I'm sorry to inconvenience a lady, but I must make you secure. I came provided with rope, but first we'll construct a gag. Don't want your maid called—yet. There now, all's shipshape. I'll secure my 'swag,' and then I'll have a little talk with you."

As one in a dream, a horrible nightmare, poor Virginia watched the rifling of her jewel-case, saw diamonds, pearls, necklaces, and bracelets disappear into the many capacious pockets of Mr. Catterwink-Dane, till everything was disposed of, and he returned to her again.

"Rather neatly done, I fancy," he said coolly, seating himself opposite his victim, "and a very decent haul. Oh, what fun it's been, and how I've laughed. You must own that the whole get-up has done me credit. I knew this would be a safe plant. You were of the soft-hearted, pitiful kind, and I just laid it on thick. I've nearly had hysterics sometimes, when I've been alone, to think how you swallowed it all, as though it were gospel. My getting the sack, and the legacy, and—oh deliver us; sometimes I thought I should burst!" And the transformed Catterwink-Dane indulged in a peal of such hearty, though subdued laughter, that he found it necessary to apply his coat-cuffs to his eyes, whilst Virginia regarded him with impotent rage.

"We've had our eye on you," resumed Mr. Dane pleasantly, "ever since you were married, and we read the account of the wedding presents in the paper. My goodness! they were enough to make a man's mouth water. No 'sets of Chandos poets,' or photo-frames, or butter-knives. No, nothing but jewels, so it seemed, and we found out you'd taken 'em with you. Brides like to, especially when they're going to stay at Embassies, as the papers announced was *your* intention. They like to cut a dash among foreigners. I hope this will be a warning to you not to put temptation in people's way, Ma'am."

Mr. Catterwink-Dane shook his head at Virginia, as she lay helpless in her chair.

"I must be off," he observed, "only just another word. You really ought to admire how neatly we got your husband out of the way. My pal in London managed it; wired and everything. And now—good-bye, my dear. It's been an amusing little game, and I feel the stage would be my proper place. Tragedy, of course, for" —the wretch grinned evilly— "I made you cry once, the first evening. You remember?

"You'll never catch me," he added, as he went to the door. "For, though you may advertise my description, there'll be no one to answer it. I fancy this make-up of mine will prove a regular teaser to the police. I'm proud of it myself. You'll have to stay as you are for a few hours; I'm sorry to inconvenience a lady, but in this case it can't be helped."

"I wish I could go to sleep till he comes back," she said with a sigh, as she returned to her novel.

Mr. Catterwink-Dane was already at the door, when suddenly a thought seemed to strike him, and he returned to Virginia. "Which do you mind most?" he asked maliciously, "the loss of your jewels, or—the blow to your vanity?" And I think at that moment Virginia would have found it difficult to say.

"So, remember, in the future," said Mr. Catterwink-Dane, with severity, "if you are inclined to think too highly of your charms that it was your jewels I admired, and—not your beauty!"

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The Banjo King

By Frank Holmfield.

Mr. Piper holds in each hand a full-sized banjo. and, while swinging them to and fro, plays a tune.

When the outlook in South Africa was at its blackest, when military blunders were followed quickly by disasters to British arms, and many a heart was rent with grief and sorrow, there was one man, at any rate, who strove his level best to rouse the drooping spirits of those who lived with the thunder of guns beating into their very souls.

And, indeed, the enlivening effect of a banjo manipulated by a player who is a thorough master of the art, must have proved most welcome to those whose ears were accustomed more to the rattle of the rifle and the wails of the wounded. And Mr. Franco Piper, who holds the unique distinction of having played the banjo through seventeen months of the war, where and whilst that war was most felt, is not the man to have spared himself where the "bink-a-bank-a-bong" of his strings was wanted.

At camp concerts, or in the wards of a hospital, his cheery music "bucked up" many a despairing heart. Up and down the line of communications he flitted, from centre to centre, from camp to camp, welcome everywhere—for caterers of amusment were few and far between; so he and his "stud" of banjos were kept as busy as the proverbial nailer.

As a banjo-soloist, Mr. Piper has few equals; in fact, it has been said of him that he is the King of banjoists. Apart from this, however, he certainly has no equal as a trick banjoist. Those who saw him on his recent visit to this country, when he appeared at the London Pavilion, will readily admit that his is one of the most marvellous performances in the world of entertainment.

What Cinquevalli can do with billiard balls Mr. Piper can accomplish with banjos—with this important difference: Cinquevalli only juggles with the ivories, whereas our South African visitor juggles with banjos—and plays them at the same time! Whilst the banjos are merrily "flying in the air" or pirouetting about his feet in all sorts of extraordinary ways, Mr. Piper's fingers find time to touch the strings to such fine effect as to send abroad a perfect flood of melody!

How is it done?

Well, they say that genius is the perfection of an aptitude for taking pains. And that seems quite true in this particular case. Even as a baby, Mr. Piper yearned for perfection in the art of playing a banjo. At three he was able to play tunes with infantile ardour, if not with touching expression. And he continued to "pull the strings" so effectively that early in his teens he was regarded as a first class soloist—the best in South Africa.

When he began to practise banjo-playing extraordinary in the way of accomplishing juggling feats to the accompaniment of his own music, he was a mere youth. Years were spent in perfecting this branch of his professional work. For three hours a day he never ceased to practise during four years for one of

When the first tune is finished he changes rapidly his position and plays a march, while the swing of the banjos marks the time.

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He places the banjos on the floor, causes them to rotate at an enormous speed, and plays a tune at the same time.

his more elaborate "tricks." It is indeed due to this sort of hard work that he now stands unique as a juggling banjoist. The accompanying photographs will give the reader some idea of his ability in this line, but one must really be present at his entertainment to fully understand how wonderful it is. Mr. Piper begins by taking a pair of full-sized banjos in his hands. Facing the audience, he swings the instruments alternately to and fro with increasing impetus. His hands and fingers are in the position shown in the photograph, viz., at the upper portions of the strings. As the banjos swing rapidly backward and forward the player's fingers are busily at work, so that a tune, produced with the utmost precision and in good time, floats through the air. The effect of the swinging movement of the instruments is decidedly a great improvement. In imitating church bells, for instance, the illusion is complete.

The performer, when he has completed the first tune, next assumes a new position. He stands with left or right side to the audience and swings the banjos sideways —as the pendulum of a clock moves—the pace gradually increasing. The tune has changed from a coon ditty to a military march, perfectly harmonised, one set of fingers playing the treble, the other set executing the seconds.

But these feats are mere preliminaries. There is something more wonderful to come. Placing the banjos upon the carpeted platform, Mr. Piper causes them to rotate at high speed — so high indeed that the instruments appear to the spectator as mere blurred forms. Fast as they are travelling, however, Mr. Piper manages to touch the right strings at the right moment as they run around beneath his fingers, and with such wonderful effect that not a single note is missed during the playing of a popular air well known to the audience. When one considers the marvellous nimbleness and touch of finger required to get through such a performance without a blemish, one begins to realise that Mr. Piper has earned this reputation that entitles him to be called the Prince of Banjoists.

A variation of the above feats. One banjo rests on the upper end of the other, and both rotate, but in contrary direction.

But if the foregoing feat is wonderful, what of the next? It is remembered that the two banjos revolved in the same direction. Now we see two piccolo banjos, placed upon a small table, and rotating at full speed, each in a different direction—*one whirls to the right, the other to the left!* Even the unmusical spectator will, under the circumstances, appreciate the difficulty of the performer in playing the same tune on the two banjos.

One banjo is rotating to the left, the other to the right, while the tune is played without an error.

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He rests a banjo on the floor, and, playing a tune all the while, causes it to move with a revolving motion across the stage.

The movements of the fingers of the left hand must be entirely different from those of the right hand, to meet the strings at the supreme moment when they pass below the fingers in their circular flight. And Mr. Piper never makes a mistake; the most musical ear in the audience will fail to detect the slightest error of sound in the harmony.

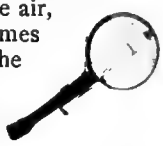
This feat is followed by another of equal, if not greater, skill. As will be seen by reference to the photograph, the pair of banjos are manipulated whilst the lower part of one rests on the upper end of the other, the two revolving at tremendous speed, but in contrary directions! I don't like to think of the fate of any ordinary banjo player who attempts to imitate this feat. Colney Hatch is the only possible sequel. It may frighten off ambitious ones when I state that only after a couple of years' hard practice was Mr. Piper satisfied sufficiently with this feat to perform it in public.

Another extraordinary way of playing a popular tune on a banjo is next illustrated in Mr. Piper's quaint way. He takes up a full-sized instrument, and, walking to the left side of the stage, rests the lower end on the carpet. He now proceeds to whirl the banjo in such a way that its rapid revolutions set it moving directly across the stage to the other side. As the banjo travels thus, Mr. Piper's fingers are as busy as ever, and whilst the banjo is whirling its way the favourite tune of "The Old Folks at Home" is flung out, with all its pathos, into the auditorium, where it is greeted with the enthusiastic applause which this good old song never fails to produce.

And now the most amazing part of Mr. Piper's playing is introduced. It takes the form of a series of juggling feats with one, and two, and three, and four, and even six banjos. The quickness of eye, and the unerring touch of finger, displayed during these feats are truly marvellous, and offer emphatic proof of what patience and perseverance can do for those who are built that way.

Playing on three banjos at the same time.

First of all, the Prince of Banjoists takes up one of his big "stud" of instruments. He throws it in the air, as Cinquevalli does a billiard ball. It sometimes makes half-a-dozen circles in the air before the strings come once more under the player's mobile fingers; but it always gets there at the precise moment when a string or two must be touched to fill in the necessary note of a tune, and that note is lightly touched and the banjo is once more well on its acrobatic career in the air.



Then another banjo is added, and both sets of the performer's fingers are called into use. One up, one down; but the right note is always "twanged" at the right moment, and the tune, be it waltz or march, is rendered as perfect in time as if the banjos rested at ease in the arms of the player. Still another banjo soon makes its appearance, and the trio are sent careering in the air amidst intense excitement, for the audience are always on the look-out for a grand smash. But it never comes. Keeping perfect time to their own tune, the three banjos leave the skilful hands of the player only to descend into them

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in turn at the proper moment. Now a fourth instrument is added. Yet the performer never quails. He is as cool in paying attention to and manipulating the quartette as he was when only one required looking after. Further, the musical effect is enhanced. In juggling one, two, and three banjos Mr. Piper only plays the air, but as soon as the fourth instrument joins the skyward flight the performer plays the air on the banjos that fall into his right hand and the "seconds" on the pair to which his left hand is devoted. The effect is really charming.

Playing a tune on four banjos.

Up to the present, Mr. Piper has not gone further than juggling with, and at the same time playing upon, four banjos in public. But he is at present hard at work on an even more sensational act—that is, juggling whilst he plays a harmonised air with no fewer than *six* instruments. He kindly allowed himself to be photographed whilst performing this prodigious feat, which the British public may see for themselves on his next visit to this little corner of the earth.

During his professional trips up and down the lines of communications and from camp to camp in South Africa, Mr Piper did not fail to have a share of experiences of a more or less adventurous nature.

One night he was hurrying back to his lodgings from a big marquee where he had given his entertainment before an audience of civilians and the military. Suddenly he was challenged by a sentry. So unexpectedly was the challenge hurled at him from the darkness, that, for the life of him, he could not recollect the countersign, nor, indeed, utter a word. The next moment he heard the rattle of the sentry's rifle as it was brought to the "present!" Then a brilliant thought saved the situation. He carried his banjo under his arm, and, luckily, it was uncovered and ready for use. In an instant the familiar strains of "Wait Till the Clouds Roll By" were strummed out. The sentry, laughing heartily, recovered his rifle and stood at attention and growled: "Advance, Mr. Piper and banjo—all's well!"

A feat Mr. Piper has not yet ventured to perform in public. He plays a tune on six banjos at the same time.

A rather pathetic little incident, in which Mr. Piper and his banjo-playing took part, happened in Bloemfontein. One evening he sat at the open window of his "diggings"—which were in a house on the outskirts of the town—practising some tunes on his instruments. As he played the familiar air "The Old Folks at Home" he heard the sound of someone weeping coming out of the darkness. Mr. Piper ran out, and, striking a light, discovered a young Boer, wounded badly.

The poor fellow was in a dying condition. Near the end he asked, in fairly good English, for the tune he had heard as he lay outside to be played again. Mr. Piper did so, and as the last bars of the melody trembled out the Boer fell back dead.

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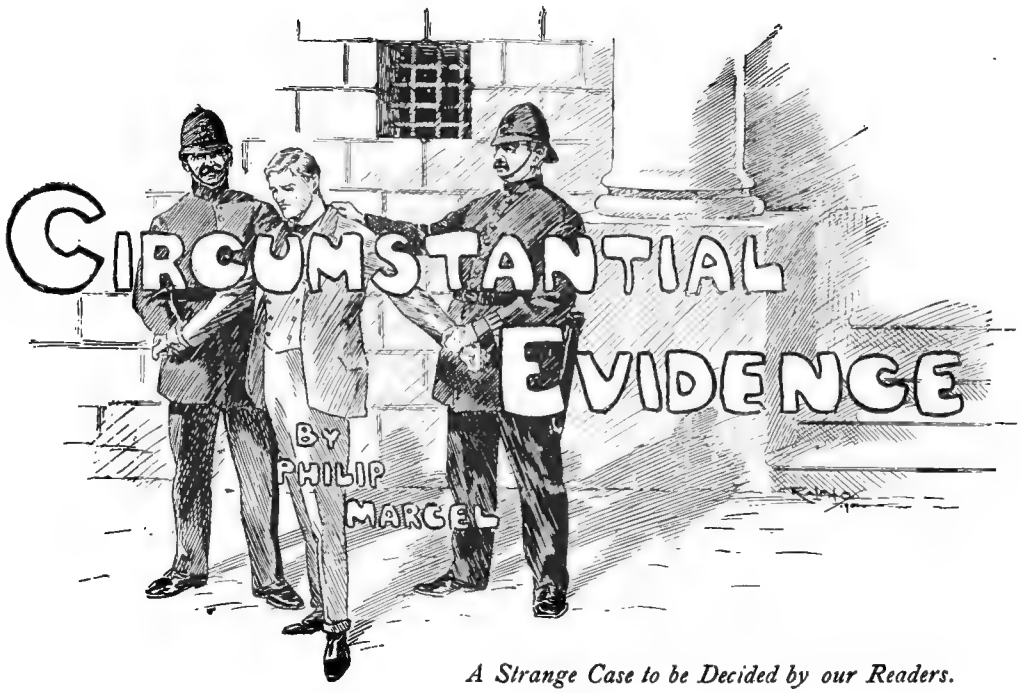

A Strange Case to be Decided by our Readers.

"I do not feel like dressing for dinner to-night. Let us send out to the Cock for a steak and a bottle of wine. I have a box of cigars here sent me from Havana by a grateful client, and some whiskey, which is, I believe, free from the germs of headache. What do you say? We can have an evening in the old style, and smoke until we cannot see one another."

"I am glad that you contemplate affecting our powers of vision by means of the cigars only," I said.

"I was speaking for myself, dear boy. After an exciting day like this I require but very little stimulant, I can assure you. You, on the other hand, can drink as much as you like, but I warn you that the Temple stairs are made of stone, unless you elect to recover on the hearthrug."

Listening to my light-hearted friend planning an impromptu meal in his chambers away up on the third storey of Paper Buildings, it was difficult for me to realise that this was the eager, nervous, impetuous lawyer who but a brief hour ago had succeeded in snatching a man's life from out the meshes of the Old Bailey.

My friend Hislop and I had not met for many years before that day—indeed, we had lost sight of each other owing to my absence abroad—and it was a sense of curiosity that led me to the dingy old Law Courts off Ludgate Hill to ascertain if the eloquent and gifted barrister who was counsel for the defence in a famous murder trial could really be my old friend and schoolmate, Jack Hislop.

Our astonishment and gratification were mutual when we exchanged a hasty hand-grip during the brief interval for lunch. Thanks to his influence, I was subsequently enabled to witness from the front row of the stalls the dramatic acquittal of the prisoner, and Hislop insisted that I should accompany him to his chambers, preliminary to a dinner at the Carlton.

The sight of his comfortable rooms, with a fire burning merrily in the grate of the spacious sitting-room overlooking the Temple Gardens, induced a home-like, restful feeling not to be obtained in a West-end restaurant.

So we dined *en Bohème*—when money is plentiful in Bohemia—and our talk of old times insensibly led up to Hislop's present position, and his brilliant achievement that day.

His animated face became grave and drawn as he said: "What a terrible moment

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that must be for a sensitive, intellectual prisoner when the jury files back into Court, and the Clerk of Arraigns asks their stolid foreman whether the verdict be 'Guilty' or 'Not Guilty.'"

"Yes," said I, "though under some conditions the result must be a foregone conclusion. Now, if your cigars were on trial——"

"Do not be flippant, Phil," he said. "The new humour but ill accords with your repute as a mighty hunter."

"My dear boy, I only meant to convey that their excellence could not be questioned. But seriously, I think I know what you mean. There must be a tinge of the same feeling in the moment when you raise an express rifle and aim at the brain or spine of an infuriated tiger measuring his distance for the final spring. It is a matter of hit or miss, with 'Kingdom come' depending upon inches and seconds."

"I doubt that that be a true parallel," was the quiet answer, whilst my friend's eyes gleamed dreamily at me through a cloud of blue smoke. "In your case there is a sense of personal conflict—the domination of mind over matter—glorified, it may be, by the fighting instinct in man. But the poor fellow in the dock is a dumb wager, as it were, between liberty and the scaffold, with all the power of the law pulling on behalf of the hangman and only a few unreliable circumstances holding out for the human life at stake. No, I imagine there is nothing so terrible as the position of a man in the dock awaiting the awful syllables about to thrill the Court when the foreman answers that simple question."

I laughed almost nervously. Your great barrister must be a great actor in voice, in manner, in gesture—and here was Jack Hislop playing upon my feelings with the skill of a famous tragedian.

"Really, Jack," I cried. "It must be bad for your nerves if you take your briefs so much to heart. Why, man alive, I always imagined that lawyers were utterly callous in their work, just as one pictures a leading physician or a successful general."

"That is so," he answered quietly. "At the moment I was thinking of a personal experience."

"What! You don't mean to tell me that you have ever been in the dock?"

"Oh, yes, I have," he said, "and what is more, I was sentenced to death."

I pushed the decanter of whiskey towards him. "Try this," I said. "It will steady you."

He wheeled his chair round to face the fire. "Would you like to hear the story?" he said.

My answer was to follow his example and light a fresh cigar.

"You will remember," he said, "that after I left Balliol my thoughts first turned towards journalism. Acting on the advice of an old friend, I obtained a position on the reporting staff of a newspaper in the north of England. Here for twelve solid months I sedulously reported Boards of Guardians, police courts, political meetings, agricultural shows, and every possible sort of journalistic engagement worthy of type but unknown to literature.

"This was a course intended, in the words of my friend, 'to take the nonsense out of me.' It did. At the end of a year I had not an unnecessary superlative left in me, and I knew that I never should be a Milton even if I were neither mute nor inglorious. I had lodgings in a quiet street of a sea-side town, in a house kept by a respectable widow and her elderly daughter. These people possessed a sort of frayed gentility. They had known better days, but they did not obtrude the fact, and, what was more, made it no excuse for bad cooking and dirty rooms, so I was thoroughly comfortable.

"One Saturday I was engaged for many hours in reporting a very important meeting of the Harbour Trust—a matter of four or five columns—for Monday's paper. After dinner I debated in my mind whether to spend the evening in the local music-hall and do my work next day, or tackle it at once and go for a long spin on my bicycle on the Sunday afternoon if the roads permitted.

"My nature always inclined me towards clearing up any task I may have in hand, so I elected in favour of home and duty. I worked steadily on without a pause until the numbering of my copy-paper showed that at least three columns of speeches by illiterate and ungrammatical shipowners had been added to contemporary history. Then I looked at my watch and found that the hour was past one o'clock. I wheeled round to the fire, lit a cigarette, and, feeling rather sleepy, decided that in a few minutes I would go to bed, as it would be an easy matter to finish my report after breakfast next morning.

"I may have dozed a little, when an unusual sound startled me back into that acute, almost painful, tension of every sense which often accompanies a sudden awakening. I imagined that I heard a deep and hollow groan; but a moment's consideration showed

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me that the idea was ridiculous. I should here explain to you that the house was built on old-fashioned lines. From the street door a flight of steps led straight up to a landing, on one side of which was my sitting-room with a bed-room beyond, whilst a similar suite occupied the other half of the first floor.

"Beneath were the usual living rooms, kitchen, etc.; whilst my landlady and her daughter slept above. There were no servants in the house. The two ladies retired to rest invariably at ten o'clock, and the street door was secured only by a latch, as my business often kept me out until a very late hour. I was on such terms of friendship with them that I felt practically certain there could be no other person in the house without my knowledge, and the suite of rooms adjoining my own had been unoccupied for over a fortnight. Nevertheless, so strongly imbued was I with the notion that someone had groaned in a blood-curdling manner, that I opened my door, lit a match, and gazed about the landing and down the stairs.

"As I expected, nothing unusual met my gaze, so I went back to my armchair and smiled at my fancies, re-lighted my cigarette and poured out a small glass of whiskey, thinking at the same time that I had done well to resolve upon a bicycle ride next day, as I was a trifle unstrung by a hard week's work. I took a mouthful of the spirit and was setting down the glass upon the table, when again there came to my ears the unmistakable groan of some person apparently in mortal anguish. This time there could be no error. I was certainly alarmed and puzzled, but I could distinctly locate the sound in the opposite sitting-room. I am not a coward, and I am, as you know, physically able to take care of myself."

I nodded, because Jack Hislop was at one time in the running for the amateur boxing championship.

"It was difficult to decide what was best to do. I might arouse my landlady and thus unnecessarily alarm her. On the other hand, I knew every policeman in the town, and by slipping quietly downstairs, could bring one of them in with me in order to investigate matters before disturbing the household.

"Had I adopted either of these courses, I would have saved myself much future agony. But the analytical temperament which finally, I suppose, made me a lawyer, led me towards a middle expedient. I reasoned that perhaps it would be well to investigate the cause of the disturbance before deciding upon any further action. I obtained a candle from my bedroom, lit it, and grasped a short, sturdy poker from the fender. Thus equipped, I gained the landing and tried the handle of the opposite door.

"To my surprise it yielded easily, for the room was generally kept locked. I flung open the door and discovered, to my astonishment, that the gas was lighted. Now, mark you, what small things contribute to the building up of circumstantial evidence. Had I neither struck a match nor carried a candle I must have noticed the chink of light shining through the crevice at the bottom of the door when surveying the landing in semi-darkness. As it was, the partial illumination of the room astounded me.

"But this mere sense of unpreparedness yielded to a lively feeling of terror when I noticed stretched on the sofa under the windows the form of a tall and stalwart man, brown-skinned and black-bearded—a man who was a complete stranger to me—whose face and hands were smeared with blood, whilst a quantity of the same ominous substance had congealed in a dark mass on the floor at a point beneath his head.

"I could hardly believe my eyes. Even whilst I gazed at him, he moaned again with that eerie suggestiveness which had earlier attracted my attention. Feebly, too, he rolled his eyes about, until they rested on me, standing in the open doorway. Pulling myself together by a strong effort, I advanced into the room. It seemed to be ridiculous to take precautions against one apparently stricken to death. I placed the candle and poker on the table and then stooped down over the strange figure, now struggling convulsively in what impressed me as his dying agony. With one hasty glance around I had assured myself that the room was otherwise empty, and it would be an inhuman act to fly at once for assistance before I discovered whether or not I could do anything for the unfortunate individual on the sofa.

"So I stooped over him, intending to examine his injuries more closely. In the same instant the stranger rose up so suddenly as to amaze me. Then, without spoken word or warning of any sort, he flung himself upon me, and for the next half-minute I was engaged in a violent and determined fight for life. So fierce was the assault, so demoniacal were the rage and fury in my assailant's face, that I instantly realised that my life was not worth a moment's purchase if he succeeded in mastering me. So I wrestled manfully with him, and although he was, perhaps, my

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superior in strength, I succeeded by a trick in freeing myself from his clutches and hurling him against the wall.

"He recovered his balance with a quickness of a born fighter, and again rushed at me. I had no time to lose. In a stride I was through the door and holding the handle against him with all my might. But, however fairly we might be matched in general strength, his hands were far stronger than mine. Slowly the knob turned in my frenzied grasp, and I knew that soon this terrible maniac would have me again in his power.

"One thinks rapidly under such circumstances, as you, my dear Marcel, must do when you are facing some varieties of the big game you are so fond of bringing to bay. So I hit upon another expedient. I suddenly shoved back the door with all my might and sent my would-be pursuer flying against the neighbouring wall. Then I darted down the stairs four steps at a time, and tore open the latch, slamming the door violently behind me.

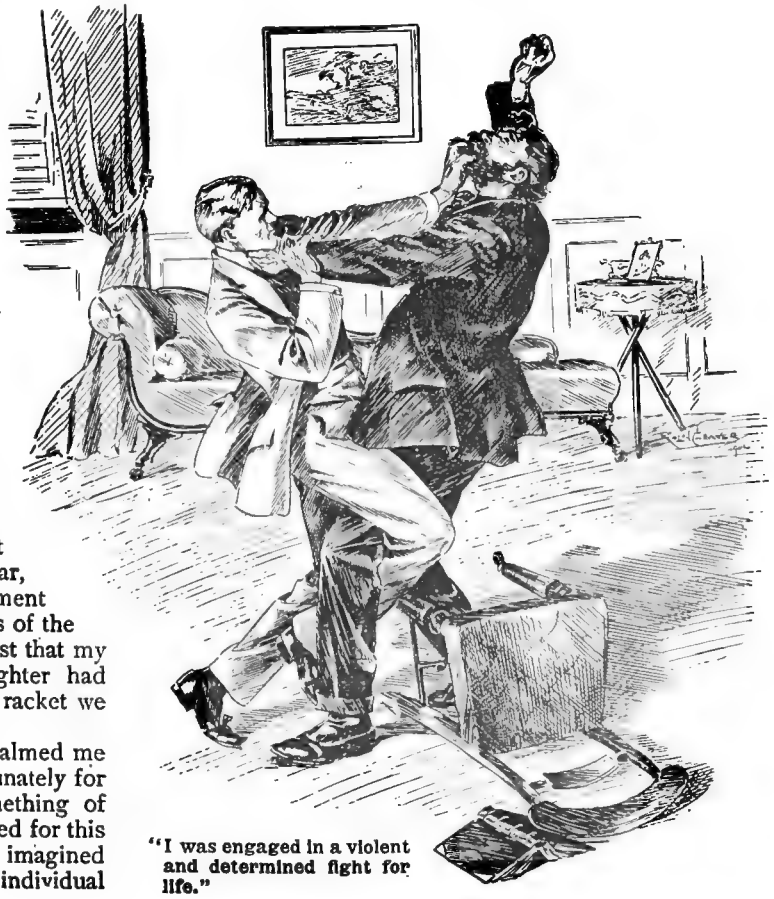
"As I broke into a run, I heard a tremendous thud on the panel of the door, and I believed, rightly as it transpired, that the madman upstairs had flung the poker after me. I darted across the street and stood on the opposite side of the way, for I was a good runner, and could trust to my legs to escape from further harm.

"But it seemed to be no part of his intentions to follow me. I waited some minutes, gazing at the house I had quitted so unceremoniously, but the man did not appear, nor was there any movement of lights in the windows of the second storey to suggest that my landlady or her daughter had been disturbed by the racket we had caused.

"The cool night air calmed me somewhat, and, unfortunately for myself, I guessed something of the truth which accounted for this strange adventure. I imagined that the murderous individual within slightly resembled a faded photograph of a much younger man which I had seen in my landlady's sitting room. 'He is some ne'er-do-well relative of the old lady's,' I said to myself, 'and if I now obtain the assistance of the police before I return to my lodgings it will create a terrible disturbance and scandal, all of which may, perhaps, be quite unnecessary. I am uninjured, and if I wait until the morning everything may be cleared up without undue fuss or excitement.'

"Finally, I adhered to the line of action indicated by my thoughts. I was well acquainted with the proprietor of a Temperance Hotel not far distant, so I resolved to knock him up and get a bed-room there for the night. In the morning I could return to my lodgings and demand an explanation of the outrageous treatment to which I had been subjected.

"On the way to this hotel, I encountered a policeman who turned his lamp on me. 'Good gracious! Mr. Hislop,' he said.



"I was engaged in a violent and determined fight for life."

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"'Good gracious! Mr. Hislop,' he said. 'What is the matter?'"

'What is the matter?' Not until the constable thus directed attention to my appearance had I grasped the dishevelled, not to say dramatic, state of my attire. I was in my slippers, and hatless. My waist-coat had been torn open. My hands, shirt, and clothes were blood-stained.

"Yet to explain these things to the constable meant opening up the whole mystery, a thing which I had decided not to do. So I smiled and said:—'It is nothing, Thompson. Soap and water will soon wash away all the damage. I am going along to Jones's hotel, where I intend to get a room to-night. I have been mixed up in a needless row, and matters will be all right in the morning.' P.C. Thompson was puzzled—even suspicious—but he knew me so well, and had such wholesome respect for the Press, that he did not question me further. He accompanied me to the hotel, listened to my not very convincing statement to the equally amazed landlord, and saw me safely admitted to the interior.

"Jones lighted me to a room. He was evidently not wholly satisfied with my explanation. 'If I were you, Mr. Hislop,' he said, 'I would have a wash. I can lend you a clean shirt in the morning. And what time shall I call you?'

"'About eight o'clock,' I replied. 'I must be out soon after nine, as I have a lot of work to do.' He said 'Good-night,' and quitted me.

"His manner was not so cordial as usual, and for the first time I felt that perhaps I was acting unwisely in not taking the policeman and Jones into my confidence. Suppose anything should happen to the lunatic during the night! What if he were to commit suicide? I might be in danger of arrest on a charge of murder!

"But I laughed at myself for these childish fears, and soon removed all traces of the struggle from my hands and face by a vigorous application of cold water. I also rubbed my damaged clothes with a wet towel, but the case of the shirt was hopeless. As I poured the blood-stained water into a slop-basin, it occurred to me that a man who has committed a murder under brutal conditions cannot readily efface all tokens of the struggle with his victim. But I was tired now, and thoroughly worn out, so I got into bed and was soon sleeping as soundly as if such things as unexpected lunatics in quiet houses never existed.

"Next morning, in accordance with my request, I was called at eight o'clock. As the first knock on my door failed to thoroughly arouse me, there came a second and more imperative summons.

"'All right!' I shouted sitting up in bed. 'I have heard you.'

"'Let me in, Mr. Hislop,' said the landlord's voice, and I thought I detected in it a note of anxiety.

"'You can come in,' I cried. 'The door is not locked.'

"But I rubbed my eyes to make sure I was awake when an inspector of police and two constables preceded Jones into the room. The inspector walked rapidly to the side of the bed. To my confused wits his manner

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implied a vague expectation on his part that I would offer some resistance to him. 'Why, Mr. Evans,' I said, 'what on earth is the matter?'

"'Something very serious is the matter,' was the stern answer. 'I arrest you on the charge of murdering James Tandy, the son of your landlady, and I caution you that anything you may say in reply to the charge will be taken down in writing and may be offered in evidence against you on your trial!'

"'What nonsense is this?' I stammered, gazing from the inspector's grave face to the stolid countenances of the two constables, one of whom was the man I had met in the street a few hours earlier, and at last fixing my eyes upon the pallid and trembling landlord.

"'It is no nonsense at all, Mr. Hislop,' replied the inspector, 'but I advise you to say nothing further at this moment. You must get up at once and dress in my presence, and I will take you in a cab to the police station.'

"'But,' I protested vehemently, 'I have not killed anybody. I was subjected to a violent and uncalled-for attack in my own rooms at an early hour this morning, and simply came here to obtain a much-needed rest until I could have an opportunity of investigating a very strange occurrence.'

"'In your own rooms, did you say?' inquired the inspector.

"'Well, not exactly. The affair took place in a set of rooms next to mine.'

"'You will remember, Mr. Hislop, that I cautioned you,' said the inspector, 'and I repeat my advice that you should say nothing until you are represented at your trial.'

"His cold and emphatic reasoning almost curdled the blood in my veins. I dressed mechanically. The policemen would not permit me to don the blood-stained shirt and Jones made no offer to accommodate me with any of his linen.

"'One of my men,' explained the inspector, 'will get you any articles of clothing you may require from your lodgings.' I noticed that the two constables were folding up my shirt and the towel with which I had cleaned my clothes. They also appropriated the slop-basin with its blood-stained water. In a sort of a daze, I accompanied them from the hotel and five minutes later found myself the occupant of a cell in the police station."

He paused for a little while and then gave me the opportunity I had longed for.

"Look here, Hislop," I cried. "Is all this that you tell me plain fact or very realistic fiction?"

"You will decide as to that when you have heard the sequel. I was taken before the local bench. The magistrates were friends of mine, but to my indignant remonstrances they turned a deaf ear, and remanded me pending the result of the coroner's inquest. This was held in due course, and a verdict of 'Wilful Murder' was brought in against me, the pompous coroner deeming it part of his duty to declaim solemnly upon the uncalled-for nature of the crime.

"Then I was brought again before the borough justices and committed for trial at the ensuing assizes, being lodged meanwhile in the county gaol. It was not until the quietude of a cell, the monotonous regularity of prison life, somewhat steadied my scattered senses that I realised the gravity of my position. I have often wondered since that during the mental horror of that ordeal I did not lose my senses. What is it that causes men to go mad? Is it possible for a sane and healthy man to suddenly become a raving maniac under the stress of intense emotion, or is it necessary that the nerves should be subjected to prolonged and ceaseless irritation before they burst the restraint placed upon them by the trained and orderly functions of the brain? I cannot tell? All I know is that during those terrible weeks of confinement I was sustained by the knowledge of my innocence, and I felt something akin to the sentiments of a mediæval believer unjustly punished for conscience sake.

"Moreover, hope sustained me. I could not bring myself to admit that the trained intelligence of an English judge would permit a man to suffer the extreme penalty of the law for an imaginary crime. It was monstrous, intolerable. Often in the silence of my narrow tenement I laughed aloud at the absurdity of my predicament, but there promptly came a stern reminder of the realities when a warder gruffly enjoined me to keep silent.

"At last the dull and dreary persistence of the law conducted me to the final stage—I faced the assize judge and the twelve good men and true who were to try me for my life. During my career as a reporter I had often attended the trials of other unfortunates, but little did I realise, in those days, now apparently so far distant, that I would one day be the central figure in the most dramatic scene known to erring humanity.

"The evidence was the same right through. The stranger in the house was my landlady's son, who, after a turbulent youth and a long absence abroad, had come back to his

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"The white cap was pulled over my face."

mother prosperous and well supplied with money. My landlady and her daughter admitted that they had not told me of his presence in the previously unoccupied rooms; they did not think it necessary, as he had retired early to rest, and we should be sure to meet next morning.

"When one of them went to wake him, she found his blood-stained corpse on the floor of the sitting-room, with his head battered in by some heavy weapon, and the condition in which my poker was discovered at the bottom of the stairs suggested that this was the implement used. A large sum in notes and gold, known to be in his possession, had disappeared, and the police had utterly failed to trace the whereabouts of the money, because, of course, I had fiercely denied all knowledge of the crime charged against me.

"The rest of the circumstantial evidence showed unmistakably that I was not only a murderer but an arrant fool. Even my solicitor, and the counsel retained for my defence—nay, indeed, my very relatives, including my widowed mother—could not be brought to believe the truth of my story. So assured were they of my guilt that the most strenuous efforts were made to show that I was insane, that my overtaxed brain had yielded to stress of work, and that I had committed this frightful deed under the impulse of homicidal mania.

"I scouted this theory as resolutely as I denied the crime. There at last came to my aid a proud defiance of fate. I resolved to bear myself bravely and to go down to a dishonoured grave strong in the consciousness that I suffered unjustly. But notwithstanding this fortitude—which the newspapers, by the way, described as 'brazen indifference'—I well remember the awful sensation of the moment when at the close of a long and fatiguing day, the jury came quietly back to their places in the Court, and I could not help scrutinising their anxious faces to see if therein lay any gleam of hope. I heard the Clerk of Arraigns deliver his fateful query. I heard the foreman of the jury say, with a break in his voice, that the verdict was 'Guilty,' and the word struck me with all the force of a sledge hammer.

"Thenceforth my life was passed in a state of coma. The impressive phrases of the judge in sentencing me to death fell upon dulled ears. Days and nights of anguish succeeded one another, until the last dread morning came, and the hangman entered my cell to pinion me prior to my execution. I passed along the gloomy corridors of the gaol, the central and woeful figure of a

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mournful procession. I heard the chaplain murmur words of consolation and hope. 'Even for the guilty,' he said, 'there is Eternal Life, if you are sorry for the crime, and be sincere in your repentance, and pray earnestly to God for forgiveness.'

"I did pray, I remember quite well. In a dazed way I felt that I must have committed some wrong which demanded this tremendous atonement, and I trusted that at least this unknown crime would be expiated. Then I stood upon the fatal drop and felt the rope adjusted around my neck. The white cap was pulled over my face. There was a sudden stifling vacuum—and I—awoke!"

Hislop's final sentences had frozen my marrow, and I positively gasped with surprise at his concluding words.

"You awoke!" I almost shouted. "Why did you petrify my very bones by telling the story in such a manner as to make me believe it was not a dream?"

Hislop now helped himself to a small supply of whiskey.

"For a very good reason," he said. "It was not a dream. In so far as a large portion of the recital is concerned, it is very considerably founded upon actual fact. Now, I have told you my story, and will make a small bet with you. If you can indicate the exact part of the yarn where the narration ceases to be reality and passes instantly into the realm of imagination, I will stand you the best dinner that the Carlton can produce, followed by a box at the Empire. If you fail, the pleasure of payment will be yours. Do you take me?" he said.

"I do," I replied. And I lost the bet.

I wonder if the readers of ROYAL MAGAZINE will be better able than I was to discern between the real and the unreal. It may interest them to try, and, to give them an opportunity to exercise their critical faculties, I beg leave to withhold my friend's explanation for a month or two.

EDITORIAL NOTE.—Mr. Marcel's interesting story is founded upon a genuine occurrence which was investigated some years ago by two distinguished scientists. The solution of the mystery is now known only to the writer and to the Editor of the ROYAL MAGAZINE. It affords ample scope for an amusing competition, so the Editor hereby offers a £5 note to the person whose letter is first opened, containing, in the barrister's words, "the exact part of the yarn where the narration ceases to be reality and passes instantly into the realm of imagination." The result will be published in our January issue.

Competitors must copy the whole of the sentence which embraces this vital part of the story, and forward it in an envelope, addressed:

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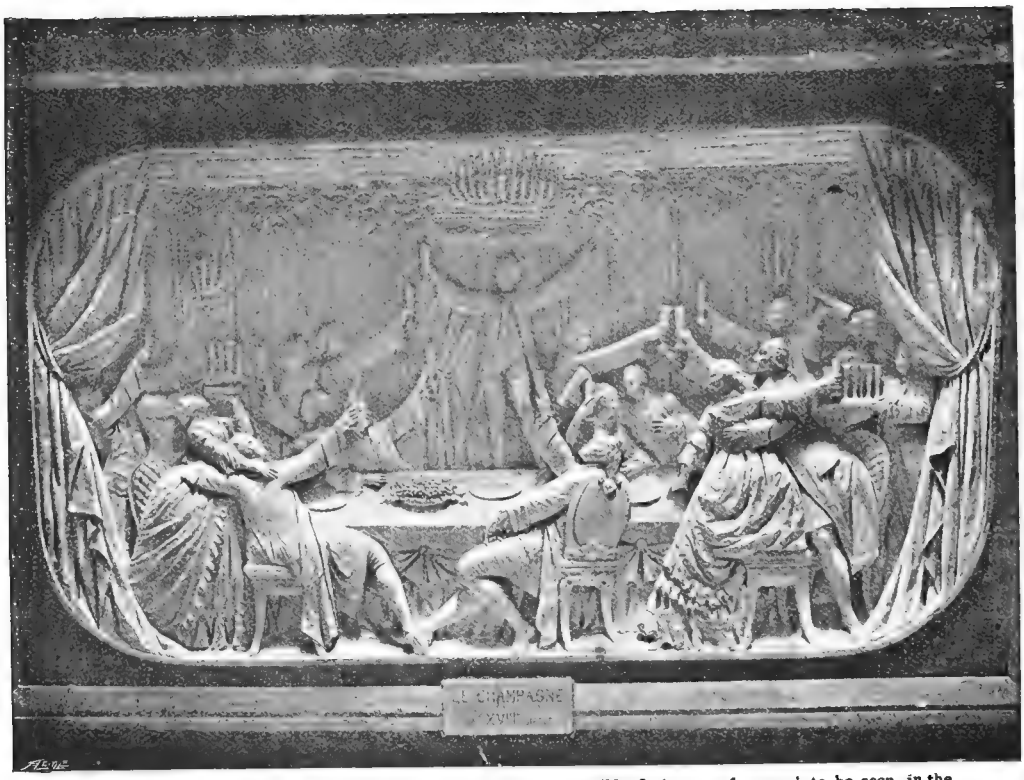

A remarkable chalk-sculpture illustrating the Court of Louis XV. It is one of several to be seen in the cellars of Messrs. Pommery, the champagne merchants of Rheims.

CHALK SCULPTURES.

By Arthur Goodrich.

Unless the withering hand of time has blotted out all traces of some civilisation prior to those of which we have any knowledge there is no doubt that sculpture was the earliest of the arts, for it was practised by man long before he commenced to portray his thoughts, feelings, and emotions, by means of painting. That the sculptor is a less skilful artist than the painter may be conceded.

To represent any material object in colour demands a dexterity in the handling of the brush, an acquaintance with the rules of light and shade, perspective and foreshortening unknown to the sculptor. But it is not just to declare that because a cutting tool, a block of wood or stone, or a lump of wax, are within the reach of the veriest savage, that sculpture is not one of those arts in which true genius can be shown.

Carved on the walls of the cellars of Messrs. Pommery & Greno, the champagne kings of Rheims, and Mercier, of Epernay, the sculptures which form the subjects of our illustrations have attracted so little attention that it is safe to say that not only are they, as I have said, unknown to the great world outside, but that few, if any, of the wine-makers who labour in the underground towns of champagne ever vouchsafe them even a glance on passing. Yet apart from their merits as works of art they have one great commanding claim on our attention. They are unique.

Careful inquiry has revealed the fact that they are the only sculptures of any pretension which have ever been chiselled out of chalk. This is not strange, for, as will be presently seen, chalk is anything but an ideal material to work on.

It was this fact which hampered M. Navlet, of Chalons-sur-Marne, when he began to test

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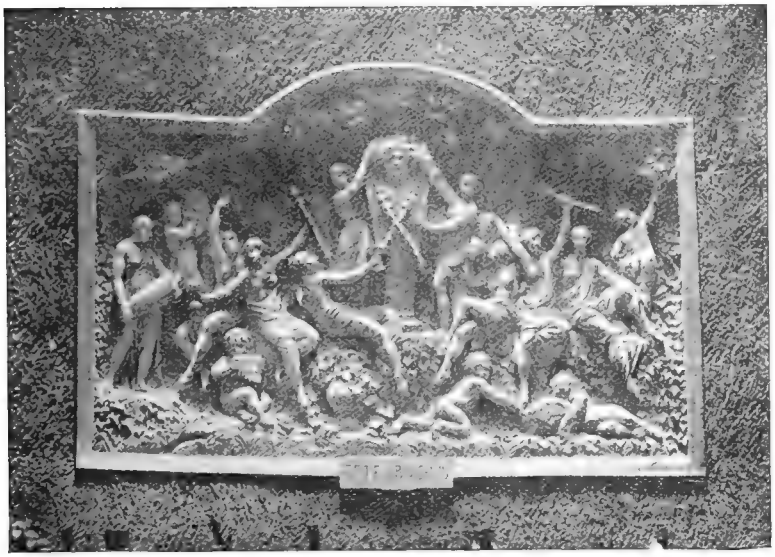

The Fête of Bacchus The first chalk-sculpture made in the cellars.

the claims of chalk as a rival to marble. But he had hardly started to work out the grand conceptions which filled his mind, when he discovered, to his dismay, that if chalk, as an art vehicle, had its advantages, it had also its defects.

The "Fête of Bacchus" was not only a subject peculiarly appropriate to the champagne district of France, but it was one of great poetical charm. The Fête of Bacchus, as M. Navlet pictured it, was no mere surface imitation of the things of every day that met his eye.

Like other deities the wine-loving god may not be the symbol or the representative of everything that is highest and noblest, but he is the only one who has never lost his hold on the affections of the people. His worship has lived through the ages because he is the popular idea of what such a god should be. Inspired by his subject the artist worked with such unflagging industry that at the end of twelve months he invited his friends to a private view.

A large concourse assembled, their curiosity stimulated by having heard much praise of this new art. When all were assembled the sculptor drew aside the curtain. A great hush fell on the gathering, but when the beauty of the work dawned on them the echoes of their applause thundered through the galleries of the ancient wine caves.

That it had grandeur without stiffness, care without pettiness, learning without pedantic exaggeration, was the universal verdict.

Then a very curious thing happened. First a leg and then an arm fell from the work. The crowd stared in blank dismay. But worse remained behind. Presently across one end of the sculpture appeared a fissure. It stole along the plastic

A chalk-sculpture illustrating the legend of Silenus.

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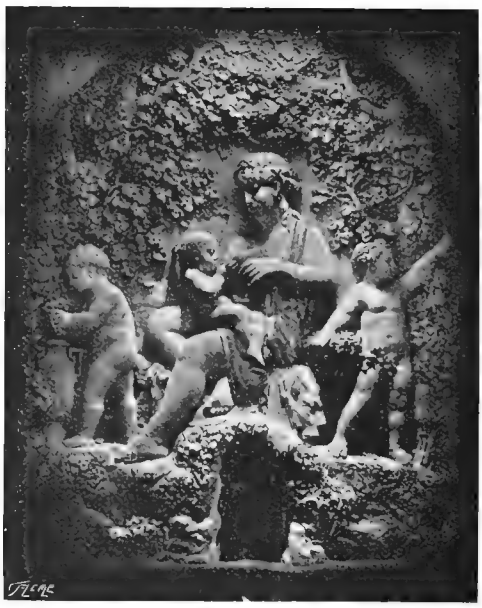
chalk, sadly weakened by a too lavish detail, crumbling the representation into ruin as it proceeded. When the company recovered from their astonishment Bacchus and his companions had vanished.

How M. Navlet comported himself history does not tell us. Filled with mingled grief and rage, the tropical warmth of his periods may have rivalled the verbal inelegancies of the British army in Flanders, or, on the other hand, he may have exhibited the chastened humility of a Sir Isaac Newton. One thing is certain, he did not despair.

So the sculptor set to work again on the Fête of the god who taught mankind how to make wine, with a most loving patience, and again, after another twelve months of incessant toil, the thin sinister crack appeared, and ruin, as before, followed in its wake.

Tenacity of purpose, which has enabled the Anglo-Saxon to accomplish so much, may not be a dominant characteristic of the Latin races, but M. Navlet was not without a goodly share. Add to enthusiasm and fixity of purpose, foresight, and what is the result of any undertaking? Success, of course. This is how the great sculptor conquered the hostility of the chalk.

Acting on the advice of Messrs. Pommery, he summoned a noted chemist to his aid, who speedily reduced the offending substance



The infancy of Bacchus. A chalk-sculpture which crumbled away five times before a permanent result could be obtained.

to submission by gently spraying the work as it proceeded with dilute hypochlorate of potash. The revels of the wine god completed, the sculptor next devoted his genius to working out the details of a conception which had long filled his mind—the Court of Louis XV.

Just as I was leaving Rheims to return to England I learned that the cellars of Messrs. Mercier, the celebrated champagne growers of Epernay, were enriched with two large bas-reliefs in chalk, and hastened there to see if their beauty rivalled those in Messrs. Pommery's cellars.

Here, too, the artist had to contend with great difficulty. The dilute of hypochlorate of potash which had been so successful at Rheims lost its potency when applied to the chalk of Epernay. The Infancy of Bacchus crumbled to pieces no less than five times. A special weak solution of the hypochlorate of potash at length enabled him to complete the work.

One other feature in connection with these matchless works of art deserves to be noticed. Sheltered from violent atmospheric changes and not exposed to the action of the wind, the sculptures show few signs of decay, indeed, with the assistance of the hypochlorate of potash there is no reason why they should not live through the century just commencing.

France offering champagne to England. A chalk-sculpture in the cellars of Messrs. Mercier, of Epernay.

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A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

By Arthur Henry.

Little Hallidina was the son of a mountain shepherd. He led a very unhappy life, because his father, who thought more of the price his wool would bring than of anything else, did not appreciate the gentle nature of his son. Little Hallidina would rather lie in the sunny meadows and dream of the beautiful future he was sure must come to him at last than watch the flock all day. His father often complained when the sheep came home hungry.

Once, while little Hallidina was hunting for good omens among the flowers, a lamb fell into the water, and his father, after counting the flock at night, gave him a severe thrashing with his stick. The next day Hallidina left the sheep to find their way back to the fold alone, and forsook the desolate hills and the hut of his father for ever.

At noon he drank a bowl of goat's milk on the door-sill of a poor woman's cottage. The woman said to him with a heavy sigh: "You must go to the King's court for a fortune; there is nothing but the bitterest poverty about here."

"When I am rich," answered Hallidina hopefully, "I will give you a bag of gold for your goat's milk."

Late in the afternoon he saw the turrets of a great castle towering over the trees, and turning a bend in the road he came upon a rambling old building handsomer than he had ever seen before. He thought this must be the mansion of the King. As he stood in the dusty road, wondering if he could slip into the stables to sleep, the door of the mansion opened, and a fat woman with a lace cap on her curls, and a silken apron tied about her comfortable waist, came out hurriedly.

"You beautiful boy—my Raphael!" she exclaimed, catching the astonished wanderer to her breast.

"I—I am not your Raphael," he gasped, attempting to free himself in vain. "I am Hallidina, the son of a shepherd."

"Listen!" said the woman, releasing him from her embrace, but still holding his hand tightly, "I live here. My little boy Raphael is dead; but his hair was long and hung in golden curls as yours does, and his face was as fair and innocent. Will you not come to fill his place? Will you live with me?"

It suddenly occurred to Hallidina that this might be the fortune he was looking for, and that at least such a bed as he knew must be in the mansion was better than stable straw. So he let the motherly woman lead him into the house.

It was not until the next day that he discovered that it was merely the home of the King's gate-keeper, and that the King's palace was farther on, along a forest road. The turrets could be plainly seen above the trees in the distance.

This depressed him very much; for although there were many strange luxuries about him, his dreams had placed him far above the child of a gate-keeper—even to the King. But he would not abandon the good woman so unworthily, and determined to make her miss the dead Raphael as little as possible.

One day little Hallidina was seated on a stone in the forest, watching the squirrels chasing each other about the trees. Suddenly

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he saw a child before him. At first he thought her the queen of the fairies, but as he looked he saw she was very nearly his own size, and that she smiled upon him. He asked her to sit upon the stone beside him. Never before had he seen raiment so rich and dainty. Her little white hands were adorned with two tiny rings, one set with a pearl that shone as a dewdrop in the sun, and one with a brilliant topaz.

And the two played together in the forest.

After a time she said she must go, or the people would become uneasy about her. So she kissed Hallidina, and patted his soft cheeks with her fairy hands, and departed, saying she would return.

The summer passed, and every day the little sun-child, as Hallidina called her, came to the cottage of the gate-keeper. The good woman, who had learned to love Hallidina as her son, looked on at their play with a strange expression of wonder and apprehension. In the mornings she and Hallidina had many conversations, and she told him wonderful stories of the King and his great court, until he longed and feared to venture there. But he forgot all these wandering fancies in the presence of the sun-child. One day she said to him :

"I wish you might marry me, Hallidina."

"Ah," cried the boy, clasping her hands eagerly, "why not?"

"Because," she answered, looking sadly at a star-flower growing at her feet, "the one who marries me must cut down the forest of the Twelve Bats, or build a tower to the moon, or throw a pebble across the lake in the valley, or tell my father the number of hairs that grow on his head. None of these can you do, Hallidina, and for this reason I will never be contented again. I used to pay no heed to the foolish people who were trying so desperately to marry me; but now, as I look from my window, I start whenever I hear a tree fall in the forest of the Twelve Bats, and I watch the people by the lake throwing pebbles, only to sigh heavily as the circles constantly appear on its surface.

He drank a bowl of goat's milk on the door-sill of a poor woman's cottage.

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Never before had he seen raiment so rich and dainty.

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"No one has ever yet attempted to build a tower to the moon, as everyone knows it is more than ten times as high up as the tallest tree, and many a brave youth has been lost in an effort to find where it touches the earth. And no one has ever tried to tell the number of hairs on my father's head, because, of course, no one knows. And so, my darling Hallidina, it cannot be, unless we should prevail upon my father to relent."

"Why do all these people obey your father? What does the King say to such a strange thing here in his kingdom?"

"The King!" said the child. "My father is the King."

"Why," cried Hallidina merrily, "then he can order everything as he pleases, and perhaps he will do away with those stupid tasks."

So the two hurried through the woods to the King's court. Hallidina was full of wonder at the splendour of the palace and bewildered by the confusion. Horses were prancing and neighing as the grooms led them to exercise, and hundreds of servants in gay apparel stared hard at the youth as the Princess led him past. And though the Princess held his hand tightly to reassure him, he felt not a little awe as he thought of the great King on his throne. He was surprised when she led him straight to a fat, jovial-looking fellow, seated at the door of the great stables, enjoying a sun-bath and the sight of his beautiful horses.

"Father," said the maid, placing one of her little hands on his big, round knee, "this is Hallidina, and he wishes to marry me. He cannot cut down the forest of the Twelve Bats, as you can see; nor can he throw a stone across the lake in the valley; and as no one has ever been absurd enough to attempt a tower to the moon, or to tell the number of the hairs on your dear old head, you cannot expect him to. But, father, Hallidina, is my true lover." She looked beseechingly into the face of the astonished King and hesitated. Then the King looked upon Hallidina, who stood proudly by the side of the Princess, entirely unconscious of the boldness of his adventure. Then he looked at his daughter again, and the sight of her tender anxiety worried him. Just to gain time he said to Hallidina:

"For goodness' sake stop pulling my hair."

"Who are you that you should ask for the Princess?"

"I am the son of Thoss Elbert, the shepherd."

At this the King grew suddenly angry.

"Thoss Elbert!" he shouted frowning fiercely on the startled children, "Thoss Elbert! Your dishonest father, my sweet-faced boy, sold me a sick lamb, and I nearly died after eating it. The servants will feed

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you, but don't let me ever see you with the Princess again."

And the King caught his daughter in his arms and carried her weeping into the palace. When Hallidina saw her last, she was kicking her tiny heels against her father's big breast, and pulling with all her strength at his beard.

Hallidina rushed after them, shouting:

"You have six hundred thousand and three hairs on your head. I have fulfilled the task! I have fulfilled the task!" But the palace door was shut, and he could only beat it with his hands and cry: "I have fulfilled the task." Suddenly an angry servant appeared and said:

"What do you want? Come, brat, don't make so much noise here."

Hallidina instantly composed himself, and said calmly: "I merely wish to announce that I have come to tell the King the number of hairs on his head, and to demand the hand of the Princess!"

The servant looked upon him in astonishment, but went with his message to the King.

"How now!" demanded the King sternly, when he was admitted to his presence. "You are as impudent as your father is dishonest."

"Sir," answered Hallidina, looking in vain for the Princess, "you have six hundred thousand and three hairs on your head."

"How do you know that?"

"I am not required to tell how I discovered it, but merely to announce the number. I have done so, and now I demand the hand of the Princess."

"Hold on," said the king, with a look of cunning, "not so fast. You are wrong by thirteen. There are six hundred thousand and sixteen hairs on my head, sir, and you shall be turned out into the woods because of your insolence."

"I maintain that I am right," answered Hallidina stoutly, "and request a count."

"A count?" cried the king.

"A count," repeated Hallidina firmly. There was evidently no way out of it, for the King was just; and though he summoned his wise men and pondered over the uncomfortable situation, he saw no reasonable ground on which to refuse the count.

Meanwhile the Princess, all unaware of the adventure of her little lover, grieved because she could not find him. She spent all her nights weeping and her days in fruitless search. Hallidina was kept prisoner in the palace while the King consulted his wise men. The day was set. "The King is to have his hair counted," whispered the servants and the people about the palace, until the strange event was noised far and near. The wood-chopper in the forest of the Twelve Bats redoubled his efforts, and the men by the lake sought desperately for the enchanted stone, which was said to lie somewhere along the shore.

The day came. Hallidina stood upon the chair beside the King, and in the presence of his whole court began to count. Every time he separated a hair from the rest he pulled it a little, and the King passed the most unhappy hour of his life. "Can't you avoid pulling?" he cried. "If I could," answered Hallidina submissively, "I certainly should; but you see your hair is in such a tangle that there is no other way of being accurate." "Ouch!" exclaimed the King, squirming uneasily on his throne, "great heavens, how can I endure it?"

Just then the Princess, who had not dared to venture upon the scene before, peered anxiously into the room. She saw Hallidina, flew across the floor, and fell weeping and laughing together at her father's feet.

"Stop!" cried the King, lifting his hand toward Hallidina, "I cannot harden myself longer against the tears of my beautiful daughter. Take her, Hallidina, and for goodness sake stop pulling my hair."

So Hallidina and the Princess were married. Thoss Elbert came to live in the palace, and he and the old King quarrelled together with great mutual pleasure for many years. The old woman received the bag of gold for her goat's milk, and the wife of the gate-keeper was appointed the royal nurse. But nobody ever knew just how many hairs the King had on his head except Hallidina, who grew in time to believe there were just six hundred thousand and three.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The CHRISTMAS ROYAL (published November 22) will be a Double Number and priced at Sixpence. It will contain a large assortment of seasonable and interesting articles, and many smart stories, all profusely illustrated.

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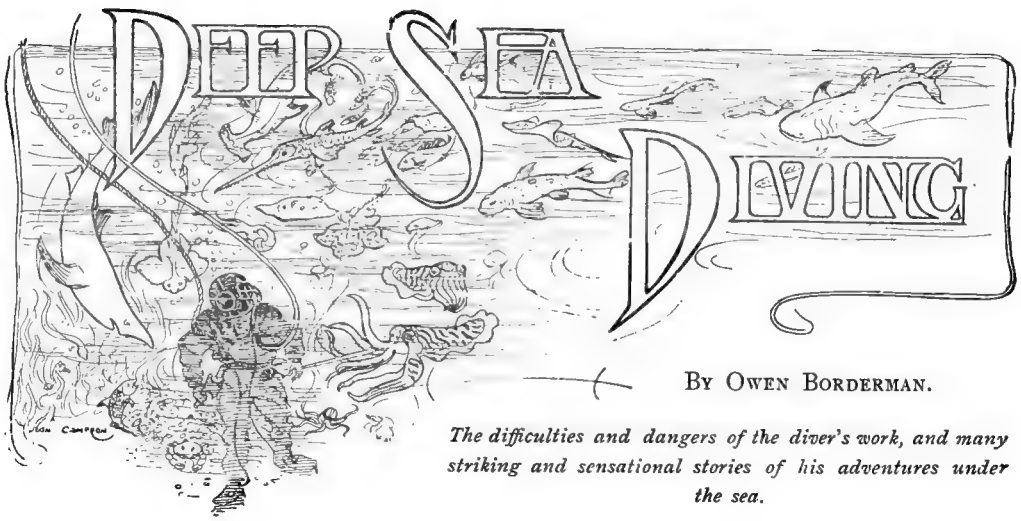

By Owen Borderman.

The difficulties and dangers of the diver's work, and many striking and sensational stories of his adventures under the sea.

"What we have we'll hold." Surely this might well have seemed the proud and justifiable boast chanted by the waves of the world's great oceans as they closed over many a gallant vessel and its cargo of treasure, living and dead. For the vessel, alas! if grudging restitution be ever made, it is but of the worthless case. But in his hold on material spoils Father Neptune must be forced to admit that those puny mortals up above are slowly but surely compelling him to relax the tenacity of his grasp. It must be as much in sorrow as in anger that he sees the men of that "tight little island," always regarded as his peculiar *protégé*, foremost in the attacks on his treasure-house.

Slowly but surely the retentive power of the sea is receding. For while a depth of over 200 feet has been reached by divers, a limit of about 150 is that at which work can safely be done. This is not to be wondered at, when it is remembered that while at 20 feet there is a pressure of eight pounds to the square inch upon the diver, at 150 feet it is increased to sixty-five pounds.

Given a man with the right physical qualities for the work—not thick-necked, with a sound heart and no apoplectic tendencies—it may be said that the chief requisite for safe and successful diving, is caution.

The diver must descend his ladder and rope slowly and with frequent stops, only moving downwards a few feet per minute, that he may become accustomed to the increase of pressure. The least discomfort should be Nature's signal for retreat; and an upward movement should always be made at any sign of dizziness or singing in the ears, and if after a second attempt the symptoms do not disappear the descent must be abandoned for the time.

Sometimes a descent is impossible from other causes. The story goes that an officer in charge of diving operations from a warship was dissatisfied with the work, and determined to go down himself to show how it should be done Unfortunately, the intricacies of the dress were new to him, and the angry diver contrived to screw up the escape-valve. The officer, buoyant to a degree with an overcharge of air, struggled vainly on the surface and gave it up as a bad job.

Once below and moving on *terra firma*, the diver must remember that while some powers are greatly lessened others are increased. R. L. Stevenson has left us an account of an amateur descent he once made off Wick as a boy. When at the bottom, his companion, an experienced diver, motioned him to spring on to a rock some 6ft. high.

Accoutred as he was in full diving dress, it seemed a rather foolish joke, but on making the attempt, Stevenson hopped up like a bird, and was proceeding further when his friend seized him by the shoulders and checked his career. Even then his legs followed downwards reluctantly, and he was hauled in hand over hand, and propped upon his feet "like an intoxicated sparrow."

It will thus be seen that while a diver's power of lifting is very great, that of hauling

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anything down is practically *nil*. Neither can he well push, unless, indeed, the tide or a current happen to be with him. To bore or drill a hole in a sunken wreck or a rock he must wedge himself against some stone or support behind him or be lashed to his work. It is a mistake to suppose that currents and tides are not felt at the sea bottom; the contrary is often so much the case that should a diver get on the lee side of his work he may find it impossible to return against the pressure, and must be raised to the surface and re-lowered.

In the matter of submarine dress there are, as elsewhere, fashions old and new, with the two important differences that obsolete modes are rarely revived, and that the sole reason for alteration is utility and safety. As to foot-gear for example. The old style was a complex mass of leather, wood, and iron, with leaden soles; now, the latest thing in boots is a single casting of brass, with an "upper" of leather, which latter can of course be renewed as often as necessary.

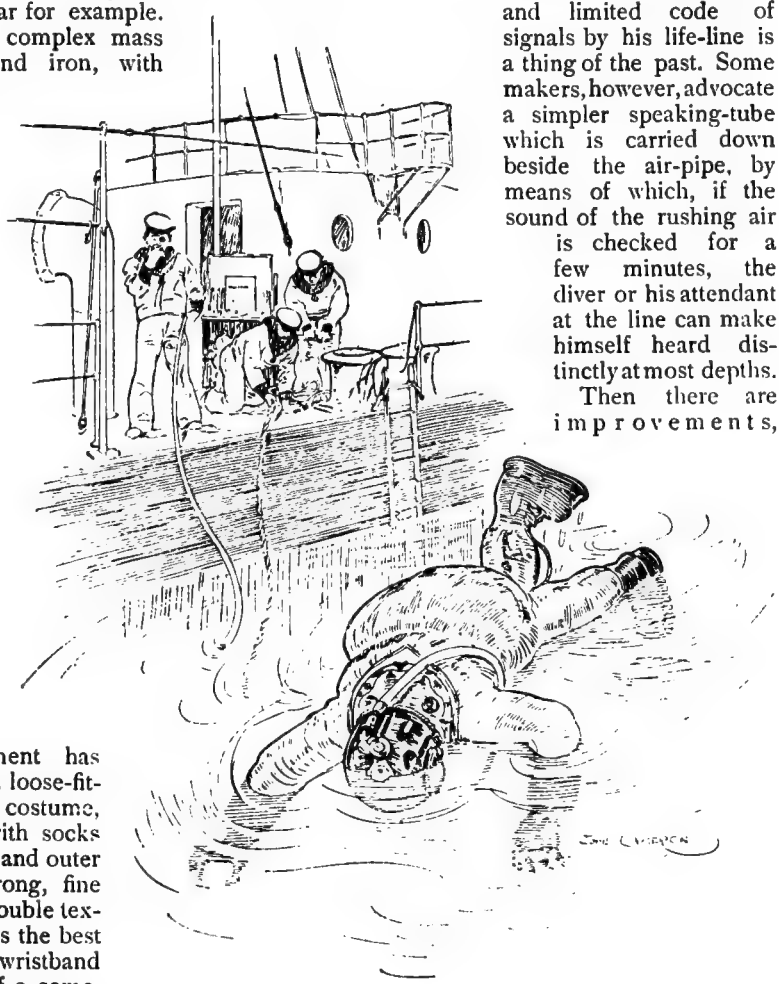
Most people have some idea of a diver's dress. His underclothing consists of woollen guernsey, drawers, and stockings, designed both for warmth and also to protect him in some measure from the pressure of the water. At certain temperatures he will wear two or even three of these suits.

His outer garment has the appearance of a loose-fitting French bathing costume, long-sleeved, and with socks attached. The inner and outer surfaces are of strong, fine twill, tanned and of double texture; between these is the best Para rubber. The wristband and neckband are of a somewhat different rubber; the latter makes a water-tight joint with the helmet and corselet, and the wristbands, themselves tight fitting, are further secured against leakage by rubber rings or cuffs. Gloves of rubber, specially shaped to allow a good grip on tools, are also at his service, but are not generally used at normal temperatures.

The helmet has suffered little alteration in shape or material—the latter is of burnished copper, with gun-metal fittings. Its weight is carried by the padded shoulder piece or corselet, to which it is screwed after being placed in position. Its three eyes, one in front and two fixed side ones, remain much the same.

But science has not neglected the diver. The telephone now goes down with him to his work, so that a fixed and limited code of signals by his life-line is a thing of the past. Some makers, however, advocate a simpler speaking-tube which is carried down beside the air-pipe, by means of which, if the sound of the rushing air is checked for a few minutes, the diver or his attendant at the line can make himself heard distinctly at most depths.

Then there are improvements,



An officer, dissatisfied with a diver, determined to show him how the work was done. But the indignant diver screwed up the escape-valve, and the officer became so inflated that he could do nothing more than wobble about on the surface.

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constant and well-nigh innumerable, in the matter of valves far too technical to be explained here, but all making for the greater safety and comfort of the diver. And here it may be said that it is not the case, as is sometimes imagined, that a stoppage of the air supply, from any cause, means certain death within a few minutes. In the event of the pipe becoming fouled or torn—the latter most unlikely, as it is practically armoured—the diver who promptly closed his escape-valves may count on his helmet and dress containing a supply which will give him twenty or thirty minutes in which to reach the surface.

Divers, like the blind, soon become expert workers in darkness; but a powerful water-tight oil lamp has been for some years in use. It can be supplied with air by its own private pump should the main pump be too small to serve both man and flame. And the electric light is now available down below.

With divers one not unnaturally connects sharks, possibly recalling one or two grisly stories and imagining more. But it seems that such must be taken with a grain of salt. A diver in full war-paint is hardly as appetising a morsel to a shark of fine taste as he would be if scantily clad or naked.

A diver, salving the wreck of a steamer, was searching for some important papers in the chart-room, when turning suddenly he found himself closeted with a shark that had followed him in. The man was in the corner farthest from the door, and his feelings were those of unmixed horror. The fish, however, showed no immediate wish to press his advantage, but rather drifted a little aside. Defence was out of the question, and the diver made a bolt—such as he could—for the door. The shark, who appears to have been quite as terrified as the diver, dashed for the emergency exit himself; and being much better equipped for such a competition, and altogether more at home, came in—or rather out—an easy first, and was not seen again.

Familiarity breeds contempt, however, and other emotions, as well, it seems. Lambert, a very well-known diver, while at work on a wreck off the coast of Diego Garcia, received a daily call from a shark. At first the brute was easily scared away by an extra rush of air from the safety valve; but it gradually grew bolder, and after a week Lambert foresaw trouble ahead. Securing a knife, he was bold enough to hold out his naked hand for a bait, and as the shark turned on its back for the fatal snap, successfully stabbed it. The backbone he still keeps as a trophy.

For men whose nerves are not in perfect order, there are other, if less tangible, terrors. A salvage diver suddenly signalled to be raised, and arrived at the surface in great perturbation. Two gigantic phantoms, grey and gaunt, had, he said, approached him in a menacing manner. The story was thought rather wanting in substance, and another man went down to investigate.

He penetrated to the saloon of the steamer, where his mate had been at work, and sure enough, after a moment, he perceived the ghosts advancing to meet him. Alarmed but determined, he raised his axe and levelled a doughty stroke. Crash! and the salvage from that steamer would be short by one full length mirror. The ghosts were the legs of the divers as reflected in the glass, only, like all else seen through the thick frontal eye of the helmet, enormously magnified.

Should any question-loving reader ask, "Has a diving-dress ever been necessarily used above water?" the answer must be "Yes," and the explanation a very sad one. The training-ship *Eurydice*, which went down off the south coast in that memorable Sunday afternoon snow squall of March, 1878, was raised in a peculiar manner. Two vessels were moored above her at low water, and to these she was made fast stem and stern.

When the tide rose the buoyancy of the floating vessels raised the *Eurydice* off the bottom, and all three were towed shorewards till she grounded again, the operation being repeated at each tide till she was beached. So many of the poor lads had been caught below and missed all chance of a fight for their lives, that the ship was a veritable coffin, and the bodies could only be approached and brought off by men fully equipped as if for deep sea work and supplied with air from the pumps.

As to the dangers of diving, the high standard of health demanded in the men employed, the care exacted of the assistants in charge of the air-pump, life-line, and speaking tube, and the unimpeachable quality of workmanship and material put into the minutest detail of dress and equipment have reduced these, as far as possible, to a minimum. But the unexpected and undesired will sometimes happen in spite of every care.

Some years ago a well-known diver was engaged at the mouth of the Tay, salving the cargo of a steamer which consisted largely of bales of wool. These were brought to the surface by a cable and grapnel fitted with four hooks. The bales, swollen with water,

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were so tightly fixed in the hole as to be dislodged with difficulty and considerable force. The diver had fixed the hooks in a bale and given the signal to haul, when, on the cable tightening, the hooks tore from their hold, one of them caught his hand before he could draw back, pierced it from front to back, and in this state of agony he was dragged a distance of 70ft. to the surface. He was laid up for weeks, and bears the marks in his hand still.

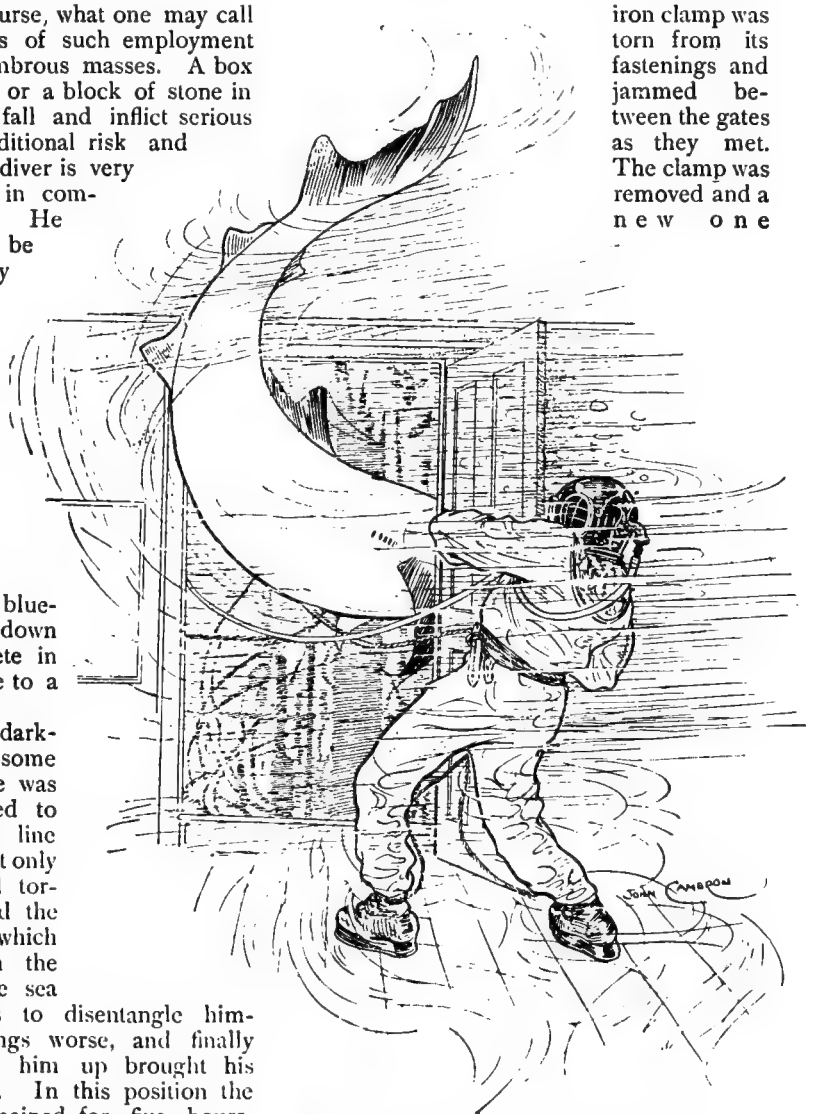
In wreckage work or in harbour construction there are, of course, what one may call the ordinary dangers of such employment among heavy and cumbrous masses. A box or beam in a wreck, or a block of stone in masonry work, may fall and inflict serious injury, with the additional risk and aggravation that the diver is very possibly alone and in comparative darkness. He may be so hurt as to be unable to make any signal; he may be pinned down, and much help and time may be needed to extricate him.

But the diver's worst fear, perhaps, is that of getting his air-pipe and life-line in any way fouled or entangled, and a terrible experience was that of a bluejacket who was sent down off the coast of Crete in 1896 to attach a cable to a dropped torpedo.

Working in intense darkness, and possibly in some current of which he was unaware, he managed to get his pipe and line completely fouled, not only round the cable and torpedo, but also round the shot-weighted line which always hangs from the diver's ladder to the sea bottom. His efforts to disentangle himself only made things worse, and finally an attempt to haul him up brought his head below his feet. In this position the unfortunate man remained for five hours, most of the time unconscious, till a diver from another vessel brought him up just alive.

This paper is headed "Deep Sea Diving," which with the exception of sponge, coral, and pearl fishing, all now conducted on the latest principles, is mostly salvage work, whether the salvage be the cargo of a heavily laden liner or a dropped torpedo. But a single experience will show that danger is not wholly in proportion to depth.

A diver's assistance was required to examine a pair of dock gates which would not shut closely. An examination by touch at the bottom of twenty feet of very muddy water showed that an iron clamp was torn from its fastenings and jammed between the gates as they met. The clamp was removed and a new one



A diver found himself closeted in a chart-room with a shark. When opportunity occurred he attempted to make for the door, but the shark, who mistook his action for an assault, and feared the diver as much as the diver feared him, dashed for the exit himself, and came out an easy first.

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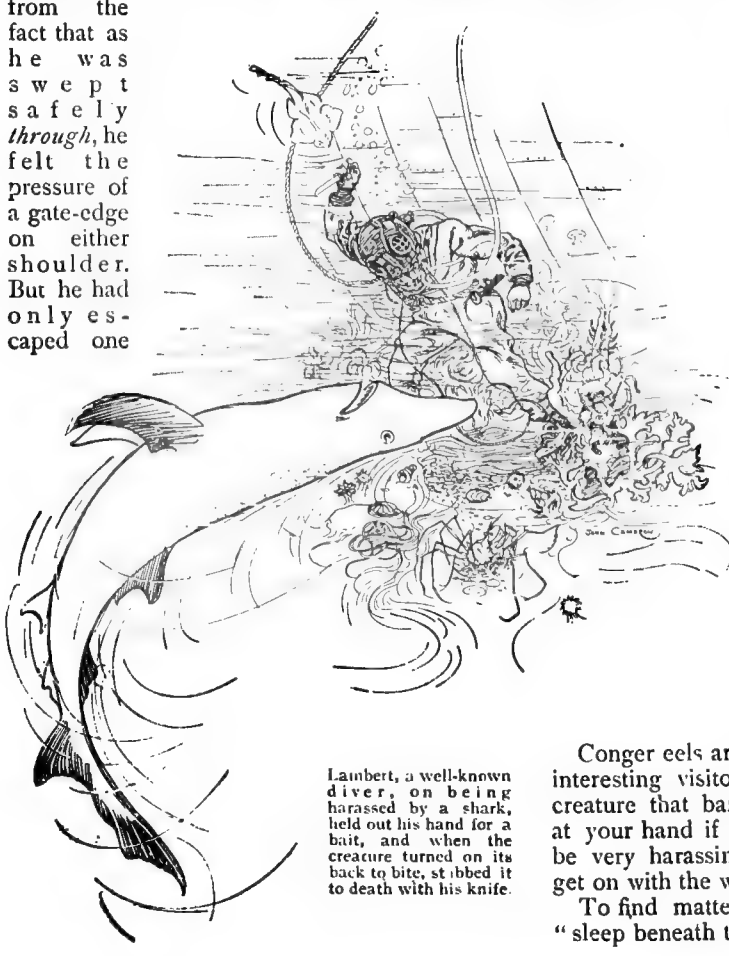
adjusted; and this being done the diver gave a pull at his line, which he had arranged should be the signal for an experimental closing of the gates before he ascended.

It is always easy to be wise after the event, and, remembering the great size and weight of the gates, the comparative helplessness of a man under water, and the fact that the diver was standing close to the gates in such a position that in closing they would move *from* him—it may seem strange that he should not have foreseen the result. To save time, moreover, he had had the gates opened about a third only, and now stood close to the narrow opening. As soon as the movement of the gates began he was swept impotently along by the great weight of water that followed, straight for the fast-closing aperture.

To be caught between those ponderous masses meant an awful death, and the narrowness of the escape may be judged from the fact that as he was swept safely *through*, he felt the pressure of a gate-edge on either shoulder. But he had only escaped one danger for another. A jerk on his line reminded him that he and his boat and mates were now on opposite sides of the closing gates; his line and air-pipe would be nipped and held, and he caught like a rat in a trap. Knife, to cut the line and allow himself to rise, he had none, for the work had not required it. His hammer! Was there still time? He pushed the head between the meeting doors, and on the instant felt them close on it and knew he was safe; the massive hammer-head was larger than the line and pipe, and the latter was still left free.

The cat-like ability of a practised diver to see in the dark is fully exhibited by the fact that after the sinking of the steamer *Caledonian* the men employed on the wreck took to pieces, and sent up in sections, both boilers and engines, and all this in total darkness.

The regard which most persons feel for the haddock is of the same nature as that displayed by the walrus and the carpenter for the misguided oysters. In the morning call which he pays his admirers the "haddock" plays a very passive part. But a diver at work on a wreck in the North Sea was visited daily for three weeks by a friendly and inquisitive haddock. "How did he recognise the fish?" asks the man who likes to probe every story to the bottom and prove it a myth. Well, the haddock had somehow suffered the amputation of a fin, and it is hardly likely that a score of these fish, each so afflicted, would have come to the same spot by chance.



Lambert, a well-known diver, on being harassed by a shark, held out his hand for a bait, and when the creature turned on its back to bite, stabbed it to death with his knife.

Conger eels are not by any means such interesting visitors. The attentions of a creature that barks like a dog and snaps at your hand if he gets the chance must be very harassing to a diver anxious to get on with the work in hand.

To find matter for a jest in those who "sleep beneath the wave" sounds at first

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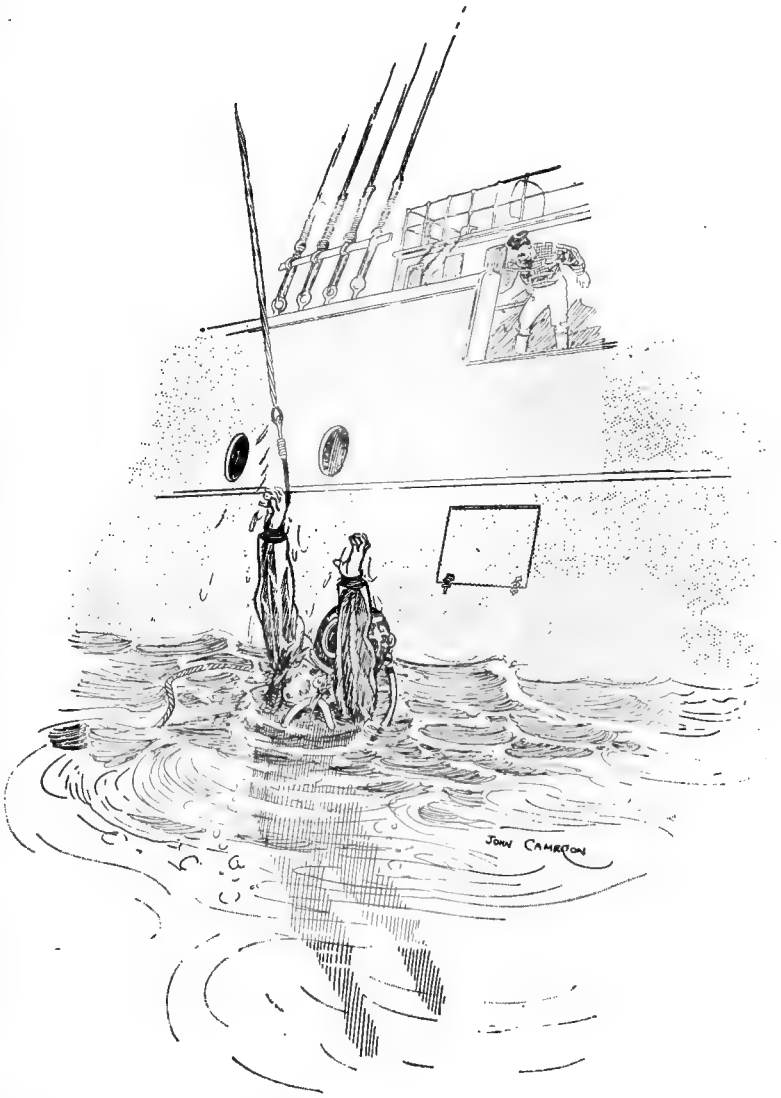
a very ghastly species of humour, but in certain maritime circles there *is* a laugh against one such slumberer. One of the lighter employments of divers is to clean from the sides of ships the slime and weed, shells and barnacles, that accumulate during a voyage. A sort of flexible ladder is fastened perpendicularly round the vessel, and on the rungs of this the diver hangs his "bos'n's chair," moving it upwards or downwards till he has cleaned all the surface that he can thus reach, when the ladder is shifted into a fresh position.

Well, one afternoon a diver was at work on the side of an armour-plated vessel, to clean which only a "couch grass" brush is necessary. An officer looking over the ship's side suddenly spied the brush float quietly to the surface, but no diver, eager to recover his lost tool and continue work, followed. Nor were signals quickly responded to; but at length the man put in an appearance, in perfect health, but much confused. He had been taking an afternoon siesta!



Bales of wool were being hauled to the surface with hooks, the diver fixing them under water. In one instance the hook slipped, pierced his hand through, and dragged him through seventy feet of water to the surface.

This man might well have taken his siesta unobserved, but he should have seen that his brush was secured to his wrist, as per regulations, before settling to sleep.

Somewhat akin to him was a select little party at work—or supposed to be so—in a diving-bell. The contractor happened to come along, and failed to note much sign of activity below. He was a bit of a diver himself, and, donning a dress, went down to get a nearer view. Inside the bell a snug game of "nap" was in progress; but there is no record of the unexpected visitor taking a hand.

Enough has been said to show that, in spite of the many risks attendant on deep sea diving, the profession is not nearly so perilous as popularly imagined. And nearly every year brings with it some new invention which is to minimise what dangers there are. Perfect health, more than pluck, is the diver's chief requisite.

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The Seat of the Scornful

By Bassett Hastings.

It is not so very long since that, had anybody told me it was possible to kidnap an able-bodied man in the Strand at mid-day, I should have laughed him to scorn. During the last few months, however, I have changed my opinions.

I have the best of reasons, too; for I, Robert Oakley, bachelor, thirty, civil servant, of Lonsdale Road, Clapham, and the Prevarication Office, Whitehall, in the County of London, was suddenly torn from the comparative comfort of a Strand A.B.C. depôt, and plunged willy-nilly into a life-or-death, touch-and-go sort of position, almost before I could ejaculate "Great Scott!"

It happened in this way. It was mid-day, and I was seated at one of the familiar marble-topped tables. My brow was knitted, for I was endeavouring to make one A.B.C. butter go the length of one A.B.C. roll. In the midst of my task, a smart little District Messenger boy elbowed his way through the crowded shop, presented me with a letter, and turned to go.

"Hi! What's this, Jaggers?" I cried after the retreating boy, thinking he had mistaken his man.

The boy came back. "You're Mr. Oakley, ain't you, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, but how did you know my name?" I replied, noticing, for the first time, that the letter was addressed to me in an unfamiliar handwriting.

"The gentleman told me, sir," grinned the boy.

"What gentleman?"

"The gen'leman wot 'anded in the letter, sir. 'E jus' brought it to the orfice, an' ses, 'Ere young whiskers'—that's me, sir—'give this 'ere letter to the gen'leman wiv the violet tie an' smashed in 'at. You'll find 'im keeping the fire warm at the back of the bun shop over against the Adelphi. An', look 'ere, if you're smart, an' don't waste no time answerin' silly questions, I'll give you 'arf-a-crown wen you gits back.'"

Before I could put another question, "young whiskers" had flown—after that half-crown, I have no doubt.

I opened the letter. Its contents were scarcely of a reassuring nature. They were brief, and to the following effect:—

"You are in great danger. An entire stranger, who has long taken an interest in you, has just willed you a substantial legacy, which will, however, pass to his nephew should you predecease the testator. This nephew is desperate and unscrupulous. He is shadowing you, watching his opportunity. If you would foil him and save your life, follow these instructions implicitly.

"Leave your seat at 1.30 precisely and walk to No. 7, Blake Court, Strand. Bring this letter with you, but do not divulge its contents to anybody. As you read these words you are being watched by friendly eyes—"

I involuntarily looked up, but the scores of hungry souls around me effectively masked the individuality of the watcher, if, indeed, he were present.

"If you are seen to breathe a word to anybody your errand will be fruitless. And you will probably be done to death within the next few days.

"If you meet the danger boldly, we can guarantee the early confusion of your enemy. You have merely to come to the address indicated, where we will give you the necessary details to assure your safety. Remember that although you have to choose quickly, you are deciding a matter of life or death, of wealth or poverty."

That was all. This extraordinary epistle ended as abruptly as it began. But what a beginning, and what an ending! And above it all rang the ceaseless clatter of the cups and saucers, the crisp crackle of the

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newly-severed rolls, and the incessant verbal cross-fire between tired waitress and hungry customers.

The busy scene suddenly acquired a new significance for me. It would go on to-morrow, I reflected, just as busily, whether I were there or not. Of all that hungry crowd there probably was not one who cared a two-penny piece if I never took another meal in his company. I sank back in my seat, crushed with the sense of my utter isolation.

Then another thought flashed suddenly across my mind. Good heavens! I had forgotten. I was not alone in that crowd. Mechanically I turned again to the letter—"As you read these words you are being watched by friendly eyes." I glanced at the clock. It wanted but five minutes of the half hour. What should I do?

My first impulse was to take the letter to the nearest police station. A second perusal, however, convinced me of the folly of such a course. Not only would my actions be watched and the writer fail to materialise; but, I reflected, at the very worst I could scarcely come to much harm within a stone's throw of the Strand, and in broad daylight, too. Possibly I might save this unexpected legacy. I decided to risk it.

A few minutes later I stood in the entrance of No. 7, Blake Court, vainly searching the cluster of brass plates for a clue to my correspondent. As I looked from one to the other in my perplexity, a young fellow who was leisurely descending the stairs, stopped to ask whether I was Mr. Oakley.

I assented.

"Do you mind walking up?" he continued. "The guvnor's office is on the top floor——"

"What are your guvnors?" I interrupted, seeing a good chance of obtaining some information about my strange correspondents.

"What are they?" he repeated, smiling as though something in the question amused him. "Why they're attorneys. Messrs. Purcell and Slingsby. That's them," and, jerking his thumb towards the topmost plate, he moved off down the Court.

It was with no small sense of relief that I noted the substantial, old-established appearance of the name-plate above me. To tell the truth the mysterious missive had set my nerves all of a jangle. I felt like a man on the eve of a step which is to make or mar his whole future career.

Some venturesome spirits find this sort of thing exhilarating. I am, however, but a plain man, and dislike things that interfere with my sleep and appetite.

It was therefore in a considerably lighter frame of mind that I climbed to the top of the house and entered Messrs Purcell's office. As I shut the door behind me, a man, who was writing rapidly at a table by the window, rose and came towards me. He was a tall, sallow-skinned individual, with a superabundance of a long black beard. His

Its contents were scarcely of a reassuring nature.

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lithe, powerful frame contrasted oddly with the huge pair of academic black-rimmed goggles which were perched upon his high bridged nose.

The first word he spoke stamped him as a citizen of the Great Republic. At his invitation, I followed him through the double doors leading to the inner office.

The next moment I gave an involuntary gasp of surprise. Notwithstanding that it was broad daylight, the solitary window of the inner office was closely shuttered. The sole illumination was furnished by a pair of oil lamps, the shades of which were so arranged as to throw the full glare upon my face.

Like a flash it darted into my mind that I was in a trap. The two men sitting in the room had purposely darkened it in order to conceal their doings from inquisitive neighbours. What they wanted with me, of all persons, I could not guess; but the general outlook seemed so unhealthy that I involuntarily stepped back to the door, determined to make a bee line for the street.

But it was in vain that I fumbled for the handle. The door had been locked behind me. Instinctively I clenched my fists and turned upon the two silent figures behind me. If the worst was to come to the worst, I could at least sell my liberty dearly.

But my move had been anticipated. As I whipped round on my heels, something bright shone in the hands of the elder of the two. "Hands up!" said he, with an accent that was unmistakable; and as I mechanically obeyed the command, he motioned me into a chair in front of the table, behind which he was seated.

"Got any fire-arms on you?" he inquired, still covering me with his revolver.

I shook my head.

"Silly fellow," was the amused comment. Then, turning to his companion, he said laconically: "Search him. People always lie when they get the chance."

"What the deuce!——" I began, and as suddenly stopped; for the revolver had perked up again with an unmistakably threatening gesture.

"Look here, young fellow," said the elder man in the tones of one accustomed to be obeyed, "I know exactly what you want to say, so don't trouble to tell me. Time's short, I may tell you, and every moment you waste is precious.

"Now listen to me. I asked you here for a purpose. It isn't the purpose I wrote you about. That was merely a blind. I wanted to get you here without the knowledge of your friends. I have done it. Let me tell you why.

"I want you to do me a service. It is very simple, and will not take you more than ten minutes. I shall pay you handsomely—with a £10 note—if you follow my instructions implicitly."

"And if I refuse?"

"If you refuse," he repeated with an emphasis that was unmistakable, "I shall be forced to the unpleasant alternative of imprisoning you here for the next six weeks. You will see that this room has been made absolutely sound proof; nobody knows where you are, and nobody could discover your whereabouts in time to release you. The other tenants in the house never have occasion to come upstairs; the landlord has been paid well in advance; and two of us are constantly upon the premises."

It certainly looked pretty hopeless, I reflected to myself. I inquired the conditions.

"They are simplicity itself," replied the elder man. "You have merely to sit quite still, to look slightly idiotic, and reply 'Colenso' to everything that is said to you by some visitors we are expecting in a moment or two."

"And if I decide to do this when shall I be free to go?" I inquired.

"I think you will decide," replied my gaoler, ignoring the main point, and laughing quietly to himself at some joke that was not quite apparent.

Whizz! went something over my head, round my waist, and across my shoulders. Before I could stir, I was bound hand and foot to my chair by the clerk from the outer office and my acquaintance of the stairs, who had entered noiselessly behind me.

Simultaneously my two inquisitors rose from their seats and abandoned what little decorum they had previously used. In a trice they had lifted me behind the table. Next they tied my ankles. Then the elder man had been pulling some heavy object into position behind my seat. I would have given worlds to have seen what he was doing, but that he carefully concealed from me. Then I felt him attaching part of this contrivance to the chair-back. "What could it be?" I wondered; but my attention was speedily diverted by their next move.

"Keep an eye on the office, George, in case they arrive too soon," said the elder man to the one I had first seen. Then, turning towards me, he placed his hands upon his hips, cocked his head on one side,

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and surveyed my exasperated countenance with the air of a connoisseur examining a plaster cast.

"Now I think you'll do," he remarked, after carefully surveying me from every possible point of vantage. "Put his jacket on," and one of his assistants threw a queer-looking garment of rough blue serge over my shoulders, leaving the empty sleeves dangling in front of me.

It must not be imagined that I submitted tamely to all these indignities. On the contrary, I raved at my persecutor like one possessed—for a time. But it was not for long. There was something very quieting about the cold grey eye of this masterful blackguard.

Simultaneously the younger man, who had not yet spoken, was donning a light, tight-fitting uniform. My chair was pushed back into that corner of the room furthest from the door, the long table was placed in front of me, and Slingsby stationed himself at my side.

Meanwhile the elder man paced the room, as I thought a trifle uneasily. Once or twice he glanced at his watch and muttered something beneath his breath. At last he stopped short, as a low whistle came from the outer office, and I thought I could detect a slight shade of anxiety in his face. But it was only momentary. The next minute he had regained all his old self-possession. Then, as the sound of voices in the outer office came faintly through the double doors, he turned to me.

"Remember," he said in a fierce undertone, "you are to answer every question with the same word, 'Colenso.' If you do so you will earn ten pounds in as many minutes. If you don't——"

The sentence was not completed. At that moment the heavy doors swung open, displaying the bespectacled figure of the man George, as he ushered in the expected visitors. They were two in number—an old gentleman and a young girl.

The former was evidently past the sixties, and walked with a slight stoop. He was a fine looking old chap, with a clean shaven face that somehow took one irresistibly back to the days of Stonewall Jackson and the War of Abolition. He spoke, too, like one accustomed to command, and with a decided American accent.

His companion was of a different stamp. Of medium height, with a pair of ruddy cheeks, and merry, dancing eyes, she was the *beau ideal* of the well-bred American girl. Clad in a neat tailor-made gown, that showed off her graceful figure to perfection, she combined the freshness of her athletic English sister with that excellent taste in dress for which the Parisienne is world famous.

I had barely time to take in these details before my attention was riveted by the doings of my gaoler in chief. Motioning his visitors to be seated, he proceeded to lay before them certain details as to my past history, which astonished me not a little. Despite his suave and polished manner, the lies which this smooth-tongued gentleman poured into the ears of his sympathetic listeners speedily convinced me of his colossal villainy.

My first impulse was to give him the lie direct, for the evident distress of the girl, and the looks of tender sympathy with which she regarded me from time to time, gave me an irresistible impulse to set her mind at rest. Then calmer counsels prevailed. I reflected that by the exercise of a little patience I might learn much that was so far inexplicable. And so I held my tongue and listened.

I was, so I gathered from the conversation, a British officer who had been left for dead in front of the Boer trenches at Colenso. Although my name had appeared on the War Office list as one of the killed, I had subsequently been discovered amid a pile of shattered comrades and slowly nursed back to life again.

Then it was discovered that my reason had left me for ever. I had been invalided home to Netley, where, by the greatest of good fortune, the speaker, Mr. Purcell, had come across me. He had immediately taken upon himself the responsibility of removing me to more comfortable quarters in a private asylum, simultaneously telegraphing to New Orleans the news of his discovery and inviting my uncle to come across and satisfy himself as to my identity.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Vernon, you will not be able to make much out of him, for the poor fellow's reason is quite gone," said my captor as he brought his explanation to a close. "He is subject to very severe paroxsyms at times. Although for your convenience I have had him conveyed here, it was solely upon the condition that an attendant accompanied him and that, as you see, the window was temporarily boarded up and he himself strongly secured to his seat."

For a moment there was silence, as, having finished his tissue of falsehood, this arch

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"Poor boy! poor boy!" I heard him sigh to himself.

hypocrite affected to be overcome by the hopelessness of my malady.

Then the old gentleman took a step forward and scanned my features with the closest interest.

"Poor boy! Poor boy!" I heard him sigh to himself, as he looked me slowly up and down. Then a shade of suspicion seemed to cross his mind. He looked at me more closely.

"Are you sure that this is my brother's son?" he asked. "Of course it must be twenty years since I saw him last. He was a little chap in pinafores then. I met him down at poor Harry's farm at Edenbridge upon my last visit to England. Somehow or other—" and he scrutinised my features again—"I cannot see any likeness to his father. You haven't made a mistake have you?"

"I am afraid, Mr. Vernon, you have formed a rather low estimate of my powers of deduction," replied Purcell, in the dignified tones of the slighted professional. "Not only have I been most careful to obtain all the necessary certificates of identity," and he held out a bundle of official-looking papers for his visitor's inspection, "but I have in the poor fellow himself a proof which I think would satisfy the most sceptical."

So saying, he stepped lightly across to my side, and holding up a warning finger to his audience, asked me the time.

For a moment I felt nonplussed. I knew by the baleful expression in his eye that he was silently commanding me to answer as I had been bidden. At the same time, whilst I was itching to throw his lies in his teeth, I was not insensible to the fact that I must learn as much as possible of his plans before I could proceed to overthrow them.

Just as I arrived at this decision he repeated his question, and I could scarcely restrain my merriment at the gratified look which lit up his face at my apparently docile reply—

"Colenso."

"Good heavens!—that voice," cried the old gentleman, suddenly sitting down as though somebody had seized him by the shoulders and forced him into his chair.

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For a moment he sat there, his eyes riveted upon my face as he slowly muttered—

"Poor boy——poor boy——there's no doubt——'tis Harry's voice for a certainty."

Then he rose and came towards me.

"I should like to question him," he said to my gaoler. "Somehow or other I cannot quite believe him as mad as you think him. He doesn't look to me like a person who is incurably insane."

"One moment, I beg of you, sir." The big man had sprung in front of his visitor. "I will just first examine his fastenings, if you will allow me. His relapses are so violent and sudden that I cannot allow you to take any unnecessary risks."

So saying he made a great pretence of looking at my bonds, under cover of which he took occasion to fiercely whisper — "Reply Colenso to everything, or I will kill you where you sit."

That threat did it. I had already suffered a good deal at this man's hands, and this gratuitous indignity was the last straw. I mentally resolved that, so far as I was concerned, both my gaoler and his £10 note should go a-begging.

Alas! I little recked what was in store for me. By the time he had passed his hands over my wrists and ankles I had resolved on my course of action, and as he seated himself at my side, as if to safeguard my questioner, I faced the old gentleman with every intention of disillusioning him.

"My dear Harry, will you not try and remember who you are?" began my presumed relative.

I glanced mockingly at the slumbering fire in my gaoler's eye as I replied:

"My name is not Harry; I am,—oh—oh—oh!"

The sentence died away in a maniacal shriek of agony. In one brief instant I had plunged from defiant coolness into a writhing, foaming, cramp-contorted creature, whose quivering nerves and muscles were straining to breaking point. Once—twice—thrice came those awful cramps. When at last they died away, I lay back senseless in the chair; a clammy, nerveless, terror-stricken mockery of the man that had sat there a few moments previously.

As my dazed senses gradually returned, I became conscious that my gaoler was still talking about me to his visitors.

"——poor fellow, his paroxsyms are very violent as you see," he said. "I was afraid when you started to question him, Mr. Vernon, how it would be. You see now how necessary were the precautions I took in order to secure him."

"Alas! I see only too well," sighed the old gentleman, in a voice that trembled with emotion.

Then I noticed for the first time that his companion had vanished. No doubt my seizure had frightened her. I felt disappointed. It was true that I had never set eyes upon the girl until a few moments previously, but even in that short time I had seen enough of her to miss her pretty face when it was gone.

It is impossible to account for these things. Personally I gave up the task as hopeless long ago. I only know that year after year a man may look unmoved into woman's eyes, until even his most optimistic friends write him down a bachelor. Then, one day, as he glances casually at some passing face, his heart gives a great leap. He has met her at last.

She may not be of his own rank in life, she may not even be beautiful. None the less in that momentary glance he has looked into a kindred soul and, whether it be for good or ill, he feels it is his destiny. But I digress.

I had little respite. No sooner did my gaoler see that I was returning to consciousness than he hastily crossed to my side, as if anticipating another paroxysm. One glance at his face was sufficient to confirm my worst fears. *He meant me to have another fit!*

Involuntarily I shrank from him, as with fiendish mockery he peered into my face and opined that I was evidently very excited and liable to another seizure at any moment. Then he moved back to his old place at my side and simultaneously I was re-convulsed by another paroxysm. Heavens! how I screamed. Heaven knows I am no coward, but this awful pain took all the manhood out of me in a moment. How can I describe it? It seemed as though my wrists and ankles were suddenly pressed against white hot metal, whilst a thousand invisible pincers wrenched and tore at my muscles and sinews as though to pull them asunder.

Again and again, in huge, heart-breaking throbs, those awful paroxysms, and every moment I felt my power of resistance growing weaker. I could not endure many more of those nerve-shattering rackings, each one of which seemed to take ten years off my life. Still they seized me with remorseless regularity. I began dimly to realise that I could no longer hold out against them.

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My brain seemed on fire, and there came a thunder in my ears as if of a thousand steam hammers. The figures in the room began to merge one into another. Then they suddenly seemed to increase in number and take unfamiliar shapes. Then something in my head seemed to snap, and I fell off the earth into space.

* * * * *

I will not weary you with the horrors of that awakening. It is sufficient to say that, for what seemed endless ages, I lay a mere cipher amid unfamiliar, but palatial surroundings. I subsequently learnt that I was in the finest hotel in London, whither I had been conveyed by Mr. Vernon's express orders; but at the time I had neither the wit nor the strength to inquire or even to trouble about what had happened to me.

It was not until three months later that, thanks to the skill of a nerve specialist, and the untiring attention of my nurse, I was able to get about again. Then it was that I learnt the full history of the infamous plot to which I had been so unwilling a party.

As I suspected, Mr. Vernon was a cotton planter in one of the Southern States. His late brother, Harry, an English country gentleman, had died some fifteen years previously, leaving an only son of the same name. This young fellow had subsequently joined the British army and been drafted to South Africa.

Shortly afterwards, his name appeared amongst the killed in the black list of Colenso. With his death his income of £5000 per annum, together with certain English estates, passed by his father's will to his cousin, Nellie Vernon. Her father immediately instructed his solicitor to take the necessary steps to wind up the unfortunate young officer's affairs.

The solicitor forthwith commissioned his senior clerk, Purcell, to carry out the business. Purcell had known the family affairs for years, and had been well acquainted with Harry Vernon, having previously visited his Kentish home when on business from the States.

Unknown to his employer, however, Purcell had fallen upon evil times financially, and the temptation to pervert this legacy to his own use had been too strong for him.

For a long time after his arrival in England, he puzzled his brains without evolving any feasible plan. Then one day, as he sat taking his lunch in an A.B.C. shop in the Strand, he was astounded to hear dead Henry Vernon's peculiarly deep-pitched voice proceeding from a table behind him. He looked sharply round, and saw — me. He even spoke to me, in order to test for himself the reliability of his own ears. That day he carefully shadowed me back to the Prevarication Office, and, by means of a judicious inquiry from a passing lad, satisfied himself as to my identity.

Then he returned to his lodgings and thought. Chance had shown him a man with the peculiar voice of Harry Vernon. How could he use him in order to secure that £5000? It was days before he hit upon a workable plan. Then he evolved one, the boldness of which made even his cool nerves throb with excitement.

Idly scanning the paper one day, he came across a paragraph in which it was stated that "The Secretary of State for War begs to announce that Pte. John Smith, previously reported killed at Magersfontein, is now reported severely wounded in the Boer Hospital, Pretoria."

In a moment his quick brain saw a way out of his difficulties. He would resurrect the dead officer, whom he knew his client had not seen since he was a child. With my unwilling aid he would gammon the old gentleman into the belief that by his own assiduity he had discovered me in a private lunatic asylum.

Whilst "I" lived, his estates and income would, of course, remain mine. But they would require management. That was to be his opportunity. He would volunteer to quit his employer's service and remain in England to look after my interests, for a small consideration. He relied upon the old gentleman's simplicity, his implicit trust in his solicitor, and his own cleverness to get the necessary deeds executed appointing him sole manager of "my" affairs. Once legally appointed steward of my estates and income, and it would be a curious thing if he could not speedily convert the whole to his own uses.

The chief difficulty was myself. In order to avert suspicion, I could only be approached at the last moment, and if I refused to play my part the whole of his elaborate plot would fall to the ground. How could I be made mad; if necessary, against my will?

The difficulty seemed insuperable Then chance threw him in the way of an old acquaintance, one Henry Read, who had suddenly left a large Pittsburg engineering works under circumstances that effectually prevented his return to that city. The two

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scamps hob-nobbed, and over their seventh cocktail Purcell unburdened himself of his difficulty.

"Give me a half share, and I will guarantee to settle that part of the business," said Read. After some demur, Purcell assented, and Read forthwith became "Mr. Slingsby."

The two rogues were not long in getting to work. Purcell saw to the clerical and Read to the mechanical part of the plot. Purcell's share included the correspondence and necessary arrangements for bringing Mr. Vernon and myself in contact.

Read converted the inner room of the top floor offices rented by the "firm" into a strong room, and fitted up the mechanism for the infernal chair in which I had suffered so much. He it was who had undertaken the *rôle* of warder at my side.

The chair itself was a dexterously contrived replica of an American electrocution chair, the batteries for which were carefully hidden behind the table which had stood between me and my visitors. The current from these cells, which had an enormously powerful voltage, was led to four metal plates in the chair, corresponding to the position of my wrists and ankles when I was strapped into it.

Miss Nellie had gathered to herself four sturdy constables.

Once I was safely strapped in position, the villains reckoned their game was won. The remarkable similarity between my voice and that of Harry Vernon was their first point; my insane repetition of "Colenso" was to be the second; whilst the moment I proved obstinate the pressure of a switch by either Purcell or Read would precipitate me into a series of maniacal convulsions, calculated to deceive even the skilled observer, let alone a simple-minded old gentleman like Joseph Vernon.

But they had reckoned without their host. Right up to the moment when, by their devilry, I had been plunged into that first fearful paroxysm, their plans had worked like well-oiled clockwork. Then, in one brief second, the scheme of months was upset by—a mere girl.

What could have been more natural than that the sight of my ravings should have overcome Mistress Nell to such an extent that she buried her face in her hands and rushed from the room? But what, on the other hand, could have been expected of Helen Vernon, Honours Course science student of Chicago University, than that she should have immediately recognised the characteristic crackle and odour of electrical discharge, and the equally characteristic nervous twitchings produced by a violent current acting upon the human frame?

Being American, she neither fainted nor gave herself away. A little feminine scream, coupled with a flourish of a dainty handkerchief, opened the outer door to her in a perfectly natural manner. A whispered word to the janitor that she would await her father at their hotel was sufficient to allay suspicion. Once clear of the dingy court, however, and Miss Nellie had gathered to herself four sturdy constables in as many minutes.

For the details of that raid, the capture of the conspirators red-handed, and my own release when literally at my last gasp, I will refer you to the papers of that date. It is sufficient to say that both Purcell and Read received heavy sentences, whilst their assistants, although dealt with more leniently, are

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not likely to intrude their knowledge of the electric current upon their fellows for some years yet.

As for me, I lay a sheer hulk for many long weeks, during which my strangely-found friends showed me every kindness. They persisted in regarding themselves as the source of all my troubles, and I wanted for nothing.

But stay, that is hardly correct. As the days lengthened into weeks, and the weeks drew on into months, I began to devolop a want which fast grew into an all absorbing passion. I wanted Nellie.

I have said very little about her, for I am one of those who keep silence concerning the woman of their choice. Somehow or other, Love has always seemed to me too sacred a thing to be bandied about in type by printer's devils. Nevertheless, the depth of our affection must not be gauged by the extent of our casual remarks.

Suffice it to say that I loved sweet Nellie Vernon from the moment I first set eyes upon her, and the weeks that I was subsequently fated to spend beneath her gentle care only added fuel to the flame. And so it went on until matters came to a climax.

She was sitting one evening by my side as I lay in my sitting-room window gazing westward up the now golden Thames, to where the sun was slowly sinking behind the Westminster Towers. Far down below us, in the Embankment Gardens, the broad walks were deserted, save for a few belated toilers, from the Temple, hurrying westward to wife and home.

Somehow the sight depressed me. I dreaded my return to the monotonous evenings in the dismal suburban diggings. How could I go back to the old commonplace life again? How lonely it would all be, unless—I glanced at my companion.

Then, struck by the thoughtful expression upon her face, I pulled a penny from my pocket and held it jestingly towards her.

"Ah!" she half sighed in reply. "They were very serious thoughts, I can tell you, sir. I was trying to strike a balance between you and ourselves. In the one scale I put poor Uncle Harry's legacy, our preservation from a wicked fraud, and your long weeks of suffering. Just how Pop and I are going to get anything good enough to put in the other scale is what is puzzling me."

Then I grew very bold.

"Would it be of any assistance if I suggested anything," I ventured.

Her face fairly beamed with delight.

"Now that's what I call really practical," she cried, clapping her hands. "I've been just dying to say something of the sort to you for ever so long, only poppa said you'd sure to get angry."

"In that case I had better name it at once," I said, hastily pencilling some characters upon a slip of paper.

"Of course."

I handed her the paper.

"H-E-L-E-N V-E-R-N-O-N — why, that's me," she cried, a sweet confusion mantling in her face.

"That is my suggestion," I replied.

Ten minutes later we had adopted it.

"That is my suggestion," I replied.

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A Terror to Playwrights.

There is a law in France which embitters the life of every dramatic author, as it confers upon every French citizen the right of having a novel or play immediately suppressed by the police if his name happens to be mentioned in it. If a character in a comedy bears the name of Dupont or Dubois, all the Duponts or Duboises in France are entitled to insist on a change of the name, or, if the manager refuses, of the removal of the play from the bill. In their anxiety to avoid unpleasantness the parodists of the Cluny Theatre decided to designate the characters in a recent piece by means of numbers. The effect thus produced is somewhat peculiar, as, for instance:

"Ah! charming 132, you are the most adorable of all women."

"And you a flatterer, Count 18."

While the two were thus exchanging compliments an elderly gentleman suddenly appears, and calls out in a voice of thunder:

"I have caught you now, Count 18! Are there any cowards in your family?"

"Gracious!" whispers Count 18, trembling in his shoes. "Gracious! Duke 53."

Duke 53 rings a bell; a lackey appears.

"Seventy-four!" exclaims the Duke, "turn this gentleman out!"

But at this point a fellow in the audience springs to his feet. "That is really too bad!" he shouts in the direction of the stage. "I will send you a summons!"

The Duke answers in surprise: "What have you to complain of? Seventy-four is only a number."

"That's just it. It is the very number I bore when in gaol, and I am not going to allow it to be degraded by having a servant dubbed with it."

Everybody had to give in to that argument; it was the law. The play was stopped there and then. I have never been able to ascertain what further befell the charming 132, Count 18, and Duke 53. I have not been able to sleep at night through speculating on the subject.

* * * * *

Young Housekeeper: "Well, supposing you are giving a dinner to ten persons, and the waiter takes French leave. What do you do then?"

Experienced Housekeeper: "Count the spoons."

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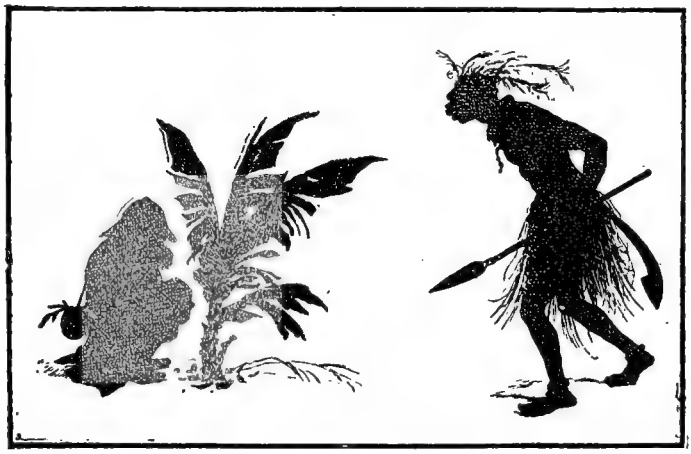
The Professor, botanising in Darkest Africa —



— is pursued by a noble savage, attempts in vain to conceal himself —

— is captured and brought away in triumph. The noble savage exults; the Professor fumbles in his pockets.

It was probably the man who married a rich wife who first started the joke on the difficulty of finding a woman's pocket.

* * *

LADY (in registry office): "Have you ever minded children before?"

NURSE: "No, mum; but I've made many a child mind me."

* * *

Little Nelly Miller heard her sister Lula speaking of a diary, and having had it explained to her that a personal diary was a brief record of one's life, she exclaimed:

"Well, then, I don't see what they want to call it a diary for; seems to me they ought to call it a livery."

* * *

Sacharissa's eyes were blue,
And her hair a golden hue,
Cheeks as rosy
As a posy:
Sacharissa such were you!

How I loved you Sacharissa!
Loving so, I longed to kiss her—
Cheeks not made
For kissing fade—
Wast a cheap foil, Sacharissa!

* * *

MAJOR FATBOY: (surveying his bulging cheeks in the pier-glass) "All flesh is grass, my dear."

MRS. FATBOY: "Well, don't you think you'd better get yourself a lawn-mower?"

* * *

"Play at a matinée?" exclaimed a rising young actress, with a look of ineffable disgust; "I would have you to know, Mr. Manager, that the stars only shine by night."

Google

A COMPROMISE.

QUOTH HE:

O, gentle Alice, tell me true,
When shall I find the quill
That's fit to write my love to you
With tender, fluent skill?

This stump won't do; profaned with scrawls
On ledgers, bills, and cheques,
Whose many a stain too oft recalls
My dire financial wrecks.

A feather plucked from the cherub-wings,
The liquid sunlight warm,
A tablet of rare pearls—these things,
Methinks are fitter form!

QUOTH SHE:

Oh, never mind the pen; you see
It doesn't count, my dear;
Just write that you will marry me,
And put it strong and clear.

I like indelible ink,
That naught on earth erases;
The others are no good, I think,
In breach-of-promise cases!

* * *

GUARD: (to country looking party) "Do you know you've been riding second-class with a third-class ticket? You'll have to pay excess."

COUNTRY L. P.: "Oi'll be biled if I dew. I paid tuppence for my ticket, and I got in a carriage wi' a two on it." He was let off.

* * *

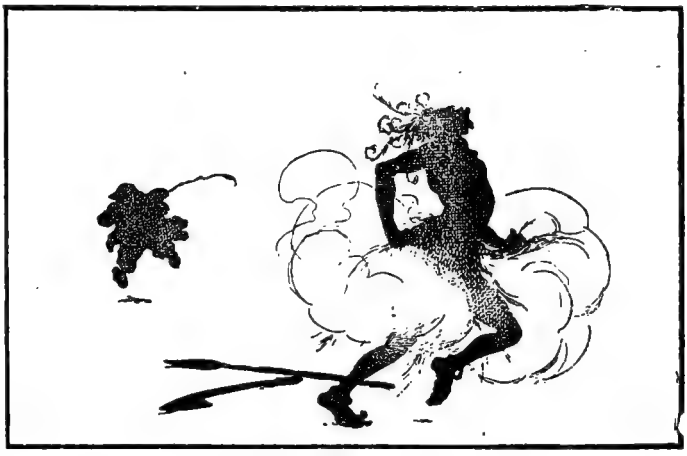
The manager of a company of strolling players lately remarked:

"My company took the largest amount of money at L——, where I granted free admission to the public."

"Indeed! but how was that, if the public were admitted gratis?"

"Ah, you see, anyone leaving after the first act had to pay two shillings. You should have seen the rush at the ticket office!"

He produces a lucifer—strikes it—



Alas! for the noble savage!

And the Professor returns to his botanising.

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HE: "Oh, that you would give me permission to lay my burning heart at your feet!"

SHE: "You may; they are very cold."

* * *

Visitor at a country house: "Did you say this was a stone's throw from the station?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have a great admiration for the man who threw the stone."

* * *

THE CLIENT'S TIME.—A bright woman, who says she has never yet found a lawyer in his office, wants a law making lawyers pay for clients' time. The lawyer never fails to charge for his own time, never thinking to deduct for the value of the time of his client.

How well all nature is arranged!
Our thanks should be profound
That rain falls downward from the sky,
Not upward from the ground.
I often sit and wonder how,
If rain rose from the street,
I'd walk. It would so complicate
Umbrellas and my feet!

"That is the sixth rabbit you've missed to-day."

"I don't care. It is my birthday, and I want to see none but cheerful faces about me."

* * *

JIMMY: "Pa, I wish I could be a pirate and sail the Spanish main and scuttle ships."

MR. SCRIMP: "Well, you just take this scuttle and sail downstairs and pirate some coal from Smith's bin."

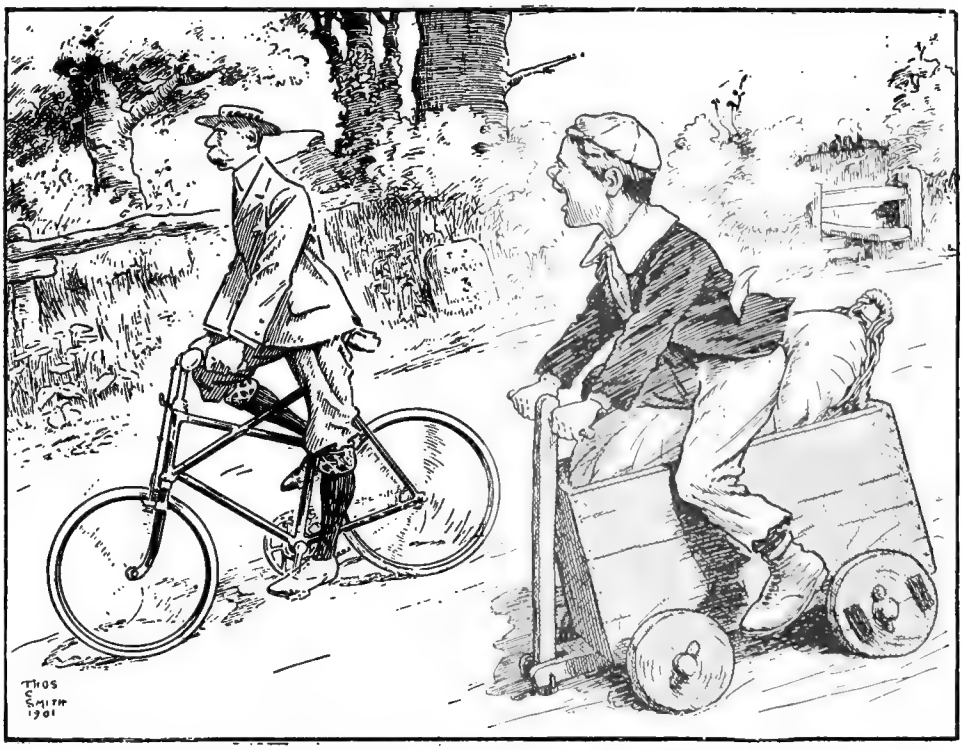
* * *

JONES: "What business are you in now?"

SMITH: "I am in the meat business."

JONES (incredulously): "Where is your shop?"

SMITH: "I haven't any shop. I am the ham in an advertising sandwich."



Rude Boy: "I say, guvnor, free wheelin' 's all right, ain't it?"

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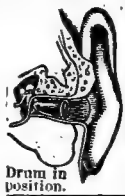

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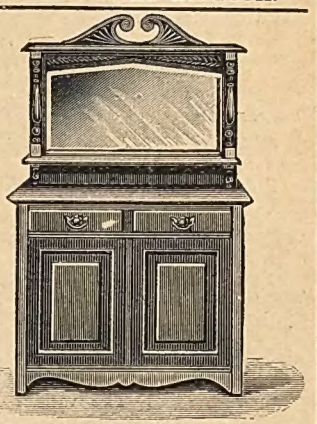

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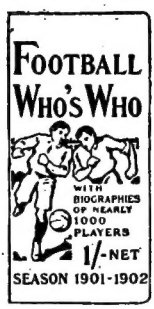

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